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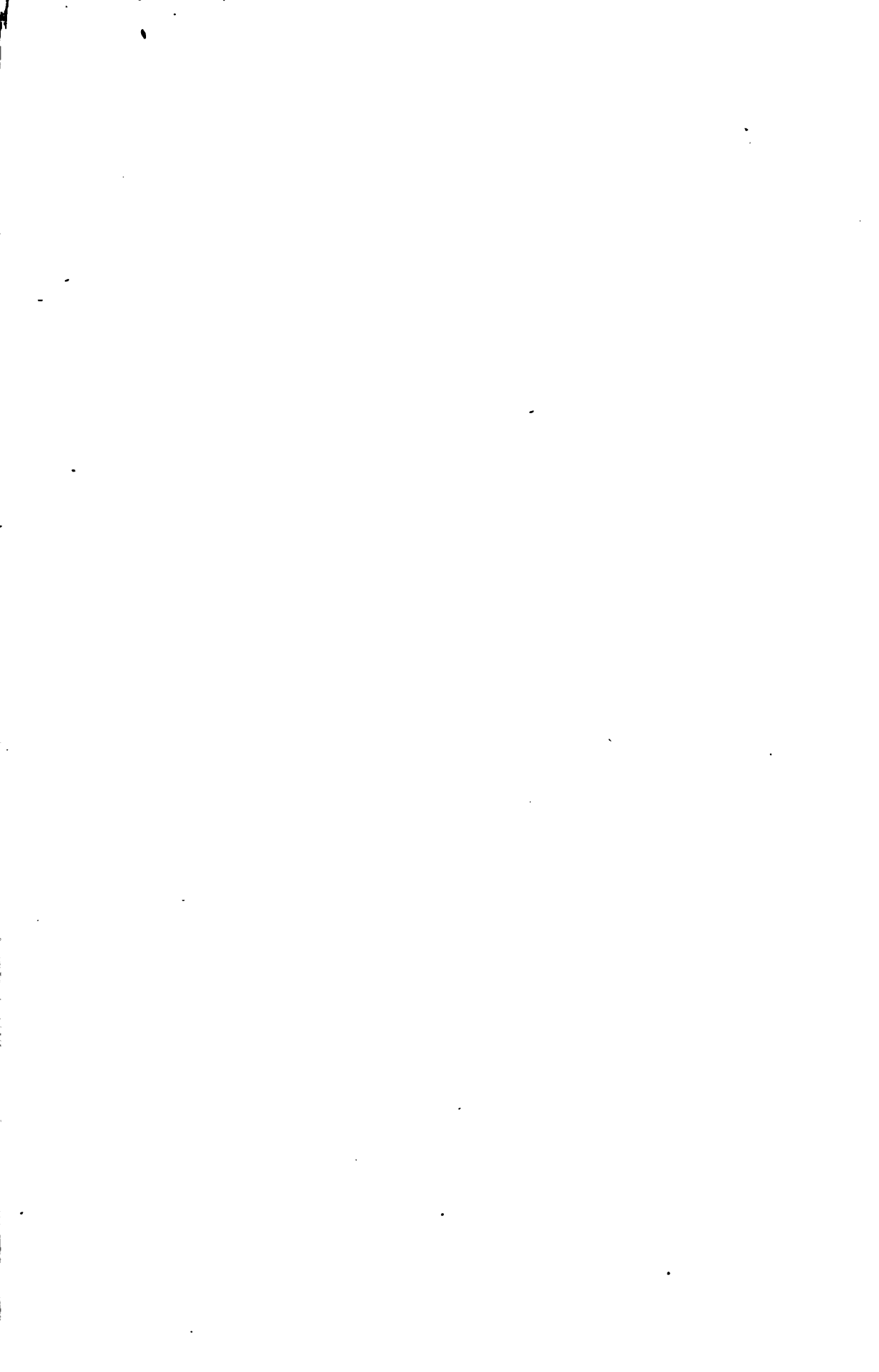
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A CRITICAL COMMENTARY
ON
THE SONGS OF THE RETURN

WITH A
HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION AND INDEXES

BY
DANIEL GURDEN STEVENS, JR., PH. D.

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The University of Chicago Press

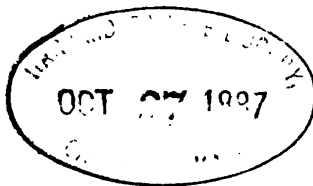
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◆ HEBREW. ◆

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A CRITICAL COMMENTARY ON THE SONGS OF THE RETURN
WITH A HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION
AND INDEXES.*

By DANIEL GURDEN STEVENS, Jr.

PART I.

INTRODUCTION AND DISCUSSION OF THE TITLE.

"The Hebrew Psalter, like the Torah, came together not as a book, but as a Pentateuch."† This resemblance extends beyond the present artificial and imitative division of the work, for a critical examination discovers certain indications of the actual structure and discerns the component elements which have been assembled to form the present whole. There are found evidences of the existence of earlier Psalters which have been embodied in their entirety, or are represented by excerpts. It appears that the Book of Psalms is built up of three great strata of Songs, each distinguished by peculiar characteristics: (a) Book I., consisting originally of Psalms ascribed to David;‡ (b) Pss. 42–89 marked (except in the case of the appended group of Korahite Pss. 84–89) by the use, and to some extent the substitution, of the name *Elohim* for JHVH; (c) Pss. 90–150, comprising especially Songs of a liturgical character. These great sections are themselves also more or less composite in structure, a fact not so readily noticed in the case of collection *a*, but easily recognized as true of collections *b* and *c*, which, since they were made at later periods, have not passed through so many changes as has

* A Thesis accepted by the Board of University Studies of Johns Hopkins University for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

† Cf. T. K. Cheyne, *The Book of Psalms*, N. Y. 1888, Introd. p. xiii; *Origin and Religious Contents of the Psalter*, London, 1891, p. 6.

‡ Four Pss. of this group (1, 2, 10, 33) are in the Hebrew text anonymous; but of these Ps. 33 is in the LXX. ascribed to David, and Ps. 10 is properly taken with Ps. 9 to form a single piece. Pss. 1 and 2 seem to have been added at a time when the Psalter as a whole was taking shape. Cf. W. R. Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, 1892, p. 197.

the earlier work, so that the several groups of Songs incorporated in them have not been assimilated to the extent of losing even external individuality. The work of the third compiler, in particular, may be quickly resolved into the pre-existent shorter collections on which it is based. Thus Pss. 92-100 form a group of pieces which, though anonymous, are very similar in thought and expression; two groups (Pss. 108-110 and 138-145) both ascribed to David,—the *Hallel* Pss. (111-118 together with 135-136 which belong to the *Hallel* class)—the fifteen *Songs of "Degrees"* (120-134),—Pss. 146-150, a group of doxologies fitly concluding the Psalter,—these form or represent collections marked by community of title or similarity in contents.

Among the minor Psalters that have contributed to the formation of the grand "hymn-book of the Jewish church" is the small group, Pss. 120-134, mentioned above as contained in the third stratum of compilation. This booklet is individualized, not only by the internal similarities that exist between its parts, but also by an obvious external feature, viz., the title שיר המעלות* which is prefixed to each Psalm. It has been reasonably considered that in the correct explanation of this heading is to be found the key to a more complete understanding of the Songs. But concerning the meaning of the confessedly obscure phrase great difference of opinion has prevailed, and not one of the numerous theories and conjectures proposed has as yet received satisfactory confirmation. To be sure, that which appears to be the correct idea, has, in part at least, been set forth by both ancient and modern commentators; nevertheless, it has not yet received the needed support, in that no one has shown that the Psalms in question may be best interpreted on the lines marked out in it. To meet this want, and thus to demonstrate in practice as in theory the correctness of the explanation, is the purpose of the present work. Before proceeding to this, it is proper to examine the merits of the various other explanations offered, and to show in what respects they are faulty.

LITERATURE.

In the preparation of this work, the following works on the Psalms have been consulted:

Psalmi Quindecim Hammaälöth philologice et critice illustrati a T. A. Clarisse, Lugdini Batavorum, 1819.

E. F. C. Rosenmulleri *Scholia in Vetus Testamentum, Pars Quarta Psalmos continens*, Ed. Secunda, 8 vols. 1821, 1822, 1823.

E. Hengstenberg, *Commentar über die Psalmen*, Zweite Aufl., Berlin 1852.

Die Psalmen erklärt von J. Olshausen, Leipzig 1853.

Commentar über die Psalmen nebst beigefügter Uebersetzung, von W. M. L. de Wette, Fünfte Aufl., herausgegeben von G. Baur, Heidelberg 1856.

* In Ps. 121 שיר למע.

Die Psalmen nach dem überlieferten Grundtexte übersetzt und mit erklärenden Anmerkungen versehen von A. Kamphausen, Leipzig 1868.

Die Psalmen übersetzt und ausgelegt von F. Hitzig, 2 vols., Leipzig und Heidelberg 1863, 1865.

Die Dichter des Alten Bundes erklärt von H. Ewald, Zweite Ausg., 3 vols., Göttingen 1866, 1867.

Die Psalter theologisch-homiletisch bearbeitet von C. B. Moll, Bielefeld und Leipzig 1869-1871.

Abfassungszeit und Abschluss des Psalters zur Prüfung der Frage nach Makabäerpsalmen, historisch-kritisch untersucht von C. Ehrt, Leipzig 1869.

Luther's Psalmen-Auslegung. Ein Commentar zu den poetischen oder Lehrbüchern des Alten Testaments, aus seinen Werken gesammelt und bearbeitet von C. G. Eberle, 3 vols., Stuttgart 1873-1874.

צֶל הַמַּעֲלוֹת אוּ מִכְתָּב לַחֻקֵּיהֶם מֵאֲתִי א' וּוְאֶלְפָּסָא, Warsaw 1882.

Dichtungen der Hebräer zum erstenmale nach dem Vermassee des Urtextes übersetzt von G. Bickell, Innsbruck 1882.

Kritischer Commentar zu den Psalmen von H. Graetz, 2 vols., Breslau 1882, 1883.

Biblischer Commentar über die Psalmen von Franz Delitzsch. Vierte überarbeitete Aufl., Leipzig 1883; the latest edition (by Prof. Friedrich Delitzsch) is not accessible.

The Book of Psalms Translated by T. K. Cheyne, London 1884.

Die Psalmen übersetzt und ausgelegt von H. Hupfeld; für die dritte Aufl. bearbeitet von W. Nowack, Gotha 1888.

Die Psalmen ausgelegt von F. W. Schultz, in the *Kurzgefasster Commentar zu den heiligen Schriften Alten und Neuen Testaments*, herausgegeben von H. Strack und O. Zöckler, 6 Abtheilung, Nördlingen 1888.

Das Buch der Psalmen in neuer und treuer Uebersetzung nach der Vulgata mit fortwährender Berücksichtigung des Urtextes von J. Langer, Dritte Aufl., Freiburg in Breisgau 1889.

The Origin and Religious Contents of the Psalter (Bampton Lectures of 1889), by T. K. Cheyne, London 1891.

Die Psalmen übersetzt und erklärt von F. Baethgen, Göttingen 1892.

THE TITLE.

Scholars have agreed as to the meaning of the first of the two words that compose the title. The *Shir*, as distinguished from the *מִזְמֹר* *Mizmôr*, is a poetical composition which, if sung at all, is to be rendered without the accompaniment of music; though the word, as the broader term, may be employed where the specific designation *Mizmôr* would be more appropriate. But the import of the second word, *Ma'âlôth*, is a matter of doubt and uncertainty;

for while it is easy to give a literal translation of the phrase, it is difficult to determine in what special sense it is used here.

Ma'·lôth is the plural of מעלה Ma'·lâh, from the stem עלה (properly על) which means *go up, to ascend*; hence the noun signifies *a going up, an ascent*, and is used in this literal sense of a journey from the lowlands of a country to high mountainous districts (Ezr. 7:9); then it is figuratively applied to the thoughts that arise in the mind (Ezek. 11:5). Secondly, it designates that by which one ascends, *a stair or step* (1 K. 10:19), as also a degree on a step-clock (2 K. 20:9). Then it is employed with reference to what is elevated, *an upper room* (Am. 9:6), and figuratively *high rank in society* (1 Ch. 17:17).

Upon one or other of these meanings vouched for by Old Testament usage not a few exegetes have based their interpretations of the title, while others have inferred or invented new definitions of the word which they think is used here in an unique special sense. There is thus no lack of explanations, some more or less plausible, others simply the offspring of the imagination of commentators. These explanations will now be reviewed, in order that the validity of their respective claims for acceptance may be decided.

It has seemed most convenient for the purpose of discussion to arrange the various explanations in classes upon the basis of the character which they assign to the title; all the attempts at the solution of the vexed problem may thus be disposed in four main groups around the following distinctive theories: viz., it has been thought:

- A. That the title has a mystical significance;—
- B. That Ma'·lôth is a metrical or rhetorical term;—
- C. That the title is a liturgical note or direction, referring to the manner, place or occasion, in, or upon, which the Songs should be rendered;—
- D. That the title points to the historical events or period which furnished the themes of the Psalms.

In conformity with the plan of treating in the last place that which seems to be the most satisfactory interpretation of the title and the Psalms, there will be discussed first the minor members, then the principal representative of each group.

THEORY A.

THAT THE TITLE HAS A MYSTICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

Several of the Church Fathers, following a method of exegesis commonly received among them, attached a mystical or allegorical meaning to the word Ma'·lôth in this place. Origen (d. 254), for example, thought of the elevation of the mind to divine things; thus he declares [*Selecta in Psalmos*,* ad Ps. cxix.

* In J. P. Migne's *Patrol. s. Gr.* vol. 12: μόνοι οἱ τῷ βίῳ καὶ τῷ λόγῳ ἀναβαίνοντες οἰκεῖοι εἰς τῶν ἀναβαθμῶν, καὶ τῶν ἐν ταῖς ψαλμοῖς μυστηρίων.

(Hebr. 120)] : "Only those persons who are ascending in life and in thought are fitted for the steps and the mysteries contained in the Songs." Eusebius (d. 340) seems to explain Ma'·lôth of ascent to the divine virtues which men have lost.* (Cf. his *Commentariorum in Psalmos reliquias superstites*, ad Ps. cxix. in Migne's *Patrol. s. Gr.* vol. 24). The same idea was more fully elaborated by Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria (d. 373), who in his treatise *de Titulis Psalmorum* † seeks to adapt these Psalms to use as the prayers of those entering the Church, and gradually progressing upward in the path of virtue; he definitely explains the title as referring to the several stages‡ in this change of life.§ Later ecclesiastical writers echo this interpretation, arguing mainly from the idea that Ma'·lâh, as well as its Greek equivalent ἀναβαθμοί, signifies only steps leading upwards; so S. Augustine (d. 430) remarks (*Enarrationes in Psalmos*, ad Ps. cxix., *Opera* in Migne's *Patrol. s. Lat.* vol. 36): "wherever (the word) 'steps' occurs in these psalms it signifies those ascending;" (*gradus quomodo in his psalmis positi sunt, ascendentes significant*). The ascents meant here are "from the valley of weeping" to "things unutterable and unthinkable." Similarly Cassiodorus (d. 575) avers (*Expositio in Psalterium*, ad Ps. cxix., in Migne's *Patrol. s. Lat.* vol. 70) that we are not to conceive of the steps as something "earthly or to be mounted by corporeal steps but let us understand an ascent of the mind" (*terrenum aut corporeis gressibus subeundum nobis sed mentis accipiamus ascensum*). Of the same opinion were B. Flaccus Albinus or Alcuin,|| the instructor of Charlemagne (d. 804), St. Bruno,¶ founder of the Carthusian order of monks (d. 1101), and finally Cardinal R. Bellarmino (d. 1621), who, after mentioning (*Explanatio in Psalmos*, ad Ps. cxix., *Opera* ed. Venetis 1728, vol. 6) the various explanations offered, concludes as follows: "This is certain, that those ascents, whether from Babylon to Jerusalem or up the steps of Solomon's temple, were

* Οἱ καταπεσόντες ἀπὸ τῶν τοῦ θεοῦ καλῶν ἀναβαίνουνσιν ἐπὶ ταῦτα παρασκευάσαντες εἰς τὴν ἀνάβασιν ἑαυτοῦς.

† *Opera*, ed. Paris 1857, in Migne's *Patrol. s. Gr.* vol. 27.

‡ Such a meaning, of a degree in the progress of initiation into, or attainment to, an office or dignity, ma'·lâh does have in post-biblical Hebrew; cf. the Mishnic Tract *Pirqa Abôth*, 6:5: גְּדוּלָה הַתּוֹרָה מִן-הַכְּהֻנָּה וּמִן-הַמְּלָכוּת שֶׁהַמְּלָכוּת נִקְנִית בְּשִׁלְשִׁים מַעֲלוֹת וְהַכְּהֻנָּה בְּעֶשְׂרִים וָאַרְבַּע וְהַתּוֹרָה נִקְנִית בְּאַרְבַּעִים וּשְׁמוֹנֶה דְּרָגִים וְגו' "The law is more excellent than the priesthood or royalty, because royalty is obtained by thirty steps, and the priesthood by twenty-four, while the Law is obtained through forty-eight things," etc.

§ A similar explanation has been given of the entire book of Psalms; Gregory of Nyssa has attempted to show (*Tractatus Prior in Psalmorum Inscriptiones*, cap. IX., in Migne's *Patrol. s. Gr.* vol. 44.) that the Psalter in its five books leads up to moral perfection; the five sections are like steps rising one above the other according to a certain series, some particular virtue being considered in each part, the course of the discussion having the effect of constantly elevating the soul toward the more sublime until it reaches the highest of virtues; ἀεὶ πρὸς τὸ ὑψηλότερον τὴν ψυχὴν ὑπερτίθει, ὥς ἂν ἐπὶ τὸ ἀκρότατον ἐφίκηται τῶν ἀγαθῶν).

|| *Expositio in Psalmos Graduales*, in Migne's *Patrol. s. Lat.* vol. 100

¶ *Commentarius in Psalmos*.

figures of the ascent of the elect, who, by the steps of the virtues and especially of charity, go up from the valley of tears to the heavenly Jerusalem.*

The idea of connecting Ma'âlôth with the notion of degrees in the attainment to moral and spiritual perfection is one that might readily suggest itself to those whose minds are alert to perceive anything that may be interpreted in a spiritual way; the comparison of the path of virtue with a series of steps reaching its culmination in heaven, is very old. But an application of the language of the Songs in accord with the idea is often forced and artificial, and involves an arbitrary disregard of the main thoughts in the pieces. A careful distinction should in any case be made between the anagogic explanation and the natural meaning. This was recognized by St. John Chrysostom (347-407) who remarks (*Expositio in Psalmos*, in Migne's *Patrol. s. Gr.* vol. 51), that viewed "from the historical point of view the Psalms speak of the return from Babylon and make mention of the captivity there, but if they be taken in a spiritual sense, they lead to the path of virtue."† Moreover, the question to be decided is not what views have been read into the Psalms by those who employed them for homiletic purposes,‡ but what meaning the poems conveyed to those for whom they were originally written and what peculiarity common to them is referred to in the title.

The number of these Psalms (i. e. 15) has also given rise to some mystical speculation. Rabbi Abraham Remokh of Barcelona calls attention to the fact that it corresponds with the numerical value of the divine name יהוה Jah, which is true enough, but the title is not thereby accounted for. St. Jerome (340-420), commenting on Gal. 1:18, connects with it the idea of perfection. "It may seem to some," says he (*Opera*, Tomus VII., p. 895, Edit. alt. Venetis 1769), "an idle thing to observe even the numbers in the Scriptures. Nevertheless not without reason do I think that the fifteen days in which Paul stayed with Peter, signify full knowledge and perfected learning, if indeed there are 15 Songs in the Psalter and 15 steps by which they ascend to sing praise to God,"§ etc. There is, however, no evidence in the Old Testament to show that the number 15 had a connotation

* Illud certum est, ascensiones istas sive de Babylone in Jerusalem, sive per gradus templi Salomonis, figuras fuisse ascensionis electorum qui per gradus virtutum ac praeceptae charitatis, ascendunt de valle lachrymarum ad coelestem Jerusalem.

† Κατὰ μὲν τὴν ἱστορίαν, ὅτι διὰ περὶ τῆς ἀνόδου διαλέγονται τῆς ἐκ Βαβυλῶνος καὶ τῆς αἰχμαλωσίας μνημονεύουσι τῆς ἐκείσε· κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἀναγωγὴν, ὅτι εἰς τὴν κατ' ἀρετὴν ὁδὸν χειραγωγοῦσι.

‡ It is interesting to note here that, at the meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis in Philadelphia, Dec. 27-29, 1894, Theo. F. Wright, of the New Church School, Cambridge, Mass., advanced the somewhat remarkable theory that the *Songs of Degrees* are a prophetic anticipation of the career of our Lord through all the events from the valley of the Jordan to the Ascension. Such an interpretation might be very edifying for homiletic purposes; but the homiletic application, in this case far-fetched, must not be confused with the actual historical background of the pieces; cf. the abstract of the writer's paper on *Messianic Psalms* in the *Johns Hopkins University Circulars*, June, 1898, p. 106.

§ Et licet quibusdam superfluum videatur, numeros quoque qui in Scripturis sunt observare: tamen non abs re arbitror quindecim dies, quibus Petrum Paulus habitavit, plenam significare scientiam consummatamque doctrinam: siquidem XV. sunt carmina in Psalterio, et XV. gradus, per quos ad canendum adascendunt Deo.

similar to that of the sacred number 7; the observation of St. Jerome is, therefore, simply unfounded. But further, upon resolving fifteen into its components, seven and eight, Jerome discovers fresh symbolism; thus in his remarks on Eccles. 11:2 (*Opera*, Tomus III., p. 480, edit. Alt. Venetis, 1757) he says: "And after that ethical Psalm, i. e. the 118th, there are 15 Psalms by which we are first instructed in the Law, and then, when the number seven has been completed, through the number eight we ascend to the Gospel."* Cassiodorus explains the interpretation just given (*Expositio in Psalterium*, ad Ps. CXIX.): "The number seven . . . signifies the week on account of the Sabbath of the Old Testament; the number eight means the Lord's day . . . a fact which pertains to the New Testament."† Bruno (*Commentarius in Psalmos*, in Migne's *Patrol. s. Lat.*, vol. 152) adduces additional reasons why the numbers 7 and 8 should refer to the Old and New Testaments. But it would be idle to give these notions here in detail, since they are merely the fruit of speculative imagination, acting arbitrarily and unrestrained by common sense; nothing in the little Psalter suggests a separation of its contents in the way indicated above; the latter eight Psalms are marked by Old Testament thought and feeling quite as distinctively as the preceding seven, so that they cannot be regarded as representative of the New Testament.

This whole plan of charging simple phenomena with grave religious significance has long since been replaced by the methods of scientific and historical investigation.

THEORY B.

THAT MA'ALÔTH IS A METRICAL OR RHETORICAL TERM.

From the analogy of other titles in the Psalter there is no reason to suppose that the heading of these fifteen Songs might have reference to peculiarities of metre or of the structure of the poems. But for considerations satisfactory to themselves a number of scholars have concluded that this is a fact.

J. D. Michaelis (1717-1791) brought forward‡ a conjecture that by Ma'âlôth poetic steps (i. e. metre) are meant. In support of this he merely quotes a Syriac expression, itself of uncertain meaning: סבלתא דמרשא i. e. *scalae odarum*, a sort of song, perhaps so called because the modulation ascended at certain intervals as by a ladder (cf. the *Thesaurus Syriacus* ed. R. Payne Smith, s. v. סבלתא). Michaelis seems to have found it impossible to give a more definite explanation; but the same general idea obtained special development at the hands of Beller-
mann (*Versuch über die Metrik der Hebräer*, Berlin 1813, p. 190 sqq.). This writer

* Et post ethicum illum Psalmum id est centesimum octavum decimum, XV. Psalmi sunt per quos primum erudimur in lege, et septenario numero expleto, postea per octoadeam ad Evangelium scandimus.

† Septenarius numerus . . . significat hebdomadam propter sabbatum Veteris Testamenti: octonarius dominicum diem . . . quod ad Novum pertinet Testamentum.

‡ *Supplementa ad Lexica Hebraica*, Pars Sexta, p. 1914, Göttingen, 1794; cf. his edition of Castelli *Lexicon Syriacum*, II. (1788), p. 575.

founded his attempt to construct a Hebrew Prosody upon a system of *morae*, according to which all syllables have the same value, and a change is brought about only by the accent; all toneless syllables were short, all heightened by the tone were long; e. g. עֲמִי קָמַל בְּלִי. Observing that nearly all the verses in these Psalms are of the same length, and that, according to his hypothesis, trochees occur very frequently, he took Ma'âlâh to mean *trochee*; the individual Songs are therefore aptly designated a *Song of the Trochees*. In confirmation of this view, Bellermann adduces the passage Gen. 31:10, where the verb עָלָה = *saltare* leap; Ma'âlâh, a derivative from this stem, would therefore be equivalent to the Greek τροχάιος. But the notion of a tripping movement, inherent in the word τροχάιος, does not belong to Ma'âlâh; the idea in the Hebrew word is that of ascent from a lower to a higher place, and the usage in Gen. 31:10 (where עָלָה is said of rams in the act of copulation) presents no exception to the general meaning. Aside from this, however, Bellermann found it inconvenient to follow consistently his own rules as to the metre; e. g. Ps. 127:1, which according to his theory should be marked thus: אֵם יִהְיֶה לֹא יִבְנֶה בַּיִת—he measured as follows: אֵם יִהְיֶה לֹא יִבְנֶה בַּיִת. As Gesenius remarked (*Thesaurus Linguae Hebraeae* s. v. מַעְלָה) he might just as well have taken Ma'âlâh to mean *iambus*. This is not the place to discuss his system of Prosody; de Wette (*Commentar*, Einleitung, p. 36) has observed that he did not succeed in showing that the Hebrews had any particular metre; and his explanation of Ma'âlâh remains simply an unsupported conjecture.

MA'ÂLÂH A TECHNICAL TERM FOR A RHYTHMIC FIGURE.

The interpretation next to be considered deserves attention not only because proposed by a scholar whose memory is honored by every student of Hebrew, but also for the reason that it is based on the observation of phenomena actually occurring in these Psalms. W. Gesenius (1786–1842), the noted Halle professor, maintained (in the *Hallische Literatur-Zeitung*, 1813, No. 205, cf. his *Commentar über den Jesaja*, Leipzig, 1821, pp. 570, 790, and his remarks in the *Thesaurus Linguae Hebraeae* s. v. מַעְלָה) that the title refers to a certain rhythmic figure in the Songs, according to which a terrace- or ladder-like ascent in the structure of verses and the movement of thought is obtained by the repetition of a part of a verse in combination with fresh elements at the beginning of the verse following. Ma'âlâh is therefore used here in a figurative sense as a technical term descriptive of the verse-structure of the Songs; and the title is to be rendered: "a Song of Degrees" (*Canticum graduum*), so that this once meaningless phrase in the Authorized Version now gains a definite connotation. The figure is said to be most clearly seen in Ps. 121:*

* The translation given here is taken from F. Delitzsch's *Biblical Commentary*, translated by Rev. David Eaton, London, 1889.

I lift up mine eyes to the mountains;
 Whence will *my help come?*
My help cometh from Jahve,
 The maker of heaven and earth.
 He will not suffer thy foot to totter,
Thy keeper will not slumber.
 Behold, *slumbereth not* and sleepeth not
The keeper of Israel.
Jahve is thy keeper,
Jahve is thy shade upon thy right hand.
 The sun shall not smite thee by day
 Nor the moon by night.
Jahve shall keep thee from all evil,
He shall keep thy soul.
Jahve shall keep thy going out and thy coming in
 From henceforth even forever.

This explanation has been approved by de Wette, who includes the newly discovered form of structure among the artistic rhythms of Hebrew poetry (*Commentar*, Einleitung, p. 54); but it has been developed more fully by C. Ehrt and Franz Delitzsch. According to Ehrt, not only are the individual Songs composed in the special rhythm, but the entire booklet exhibits a similar systematic disposition of its contents; his idea represents the extreme limits to which those who follow the lead of Gesenius in explaining the title might be tempted to go, but it is an extension of the theory not warranted by the evidence in the Psalms.*

While Gesenius admitted that in several Songs the figure does not occur, Delitzsch thinks that all of them are marked to a greater or less degree of prominence by the same rhetorical feature, and that on account of this common peculiarity they have been placed together. Though the structure does not appear in the same way throughout, yet "it is enough that here as nowhere else * * *"

* He thinks that the 15 Songs form a connected whole in which may be observed an upward progress of feelings from the lowest degree of pain to the highest degree of joy; also a gradual development of the events and experiences that form the historical background from the last period of the exile to the building of the temple. So the Psalms fall into three groups as products of three successive periods: (a) four Psalms (120-123) of the Exile; (b) five Psalms (124-128) of the earlier times of the Return; (c) six Psalms (129-134) of the period of the building of the Temple. But this division is not justified by the contents of the Psalms, not one of which appears to have been composed during the exile. Psalm 123, with its clear representation of Jerusalem as rebuilt and of the temple-worship as restored, must have been composed subsequent to the third period recognized by Ehrt. As elsewhere in the Psalter, the chronological order of composition is by no means the present order of arrangement: for, in that case, Ps. 123 should be placed after Ps. 132, a Song which reflects the Messianic hopes of Haggai and Zechariah. This series of word-pictures appears not as a logically developed historical record, but rather as a number of sketches, collected in a single volume, unedited, unarranged, except perhaps with a view to bring out contrasts (e. g. between vexation and joy, 123, 124), or to place like with like (e. g. 127, 128 both referring to domestic happiness). While the general tone of the closing pieces (e. g. 132, 133 is perhaps brighter than that of the opening Psalms 120, 123), yet a defined gradation in the feelings of the congregation as reflected in the poems cannot be made out.

parallelism retires into the background, and a preference is expressed for the use of this figure."

The possibility of using *Ma'îlâh* as *terminus technicus* in the sense required may be admitted, though the title would then stand as something unique among the headings of the Psalms. But especially in the absence of any other example of the term with this peculiar significance, the Songs themselves must furnish strong evidence to establish the alleged meaning. If this form of structure is so dominant a characteristic as to lend individuality to the body of Songs in question, sharply distinguishing it as a whole from the great mass of the Psalter; if it is the one peculiarity possessed by each Song which would account for the formation of the separate book designated by a special title—then the explanation of Gesenius may be stamped as correct. But these necessary conditions are not fulfilled. For the rhetorical figure described above is not conspicuous in these Psalms. Gesenius (*Thesaurus* s. v. מעלה) mentions twenty-six out of the one hundred and one verses in these Psalms as illustrating the rhythmic ascent in thought and language, viz.: 121:1, 2, 3, 4, 5; 122:2, 3, 4; 123:3, 4; 124:1, 2, 3, 4, 5; 126:2, 3; 129:1, 2; 130:5, 6, 7, 8; 131:2; 132:2, 3; to this number Delitzsch adds thirty-eight: 120:2, 3, 5, 6, 7; 121:7, 8; 122:5, 6, 7, 8; 123:1, 2; 124:7; 125:1, 2, 3, 4; 126:6; 127:1, 2, 3, 4; 128:1, 2, 4, 5, 6; 129:8; 132:2, 5, 9, 16, 18, 14; 134:1, 2, 3. But a great many of these alleged examples are clearly not legitimate. Instances of repetition are numerous in these Songs, but of various kinds. In the matter of word-figures, the position occupied by the repeated word or words is the determining consideration; so in Ps. 122:2, 3:

עמדות היו רגלינו בשערך ירושלם
ירושלם הבנויה

2, *Our feet do indeed stand in thy gates, O Jerusalem!*

3, *Jerusalem, that is rebuilt as a city.*

The repetition clearly belongs to a different category from that in Ps. 132:13, 14:

כי בחר יהוה בציון אוה למושב לו
זאת מנוחתי עדי עד פה אשב כי אֶחָיָהּ

13, *For JHVH has chosen Zion, he has desired it for his dwelling.*

14, *This is my habitation forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it.*

In the latter passage the repeated word stands at the end, not the beginning, of the second verse; this is also the case in Ps. 128:1, 2; 124:4, 5; 122:7, 8; 127:3, 4; 134:1, 2. Further, the repetition of the phrase *deceitful tongue* in Ps. 120:2, 3 is not analogous to the emphatic reiteration of a whole clause in Ps. 124:1, 2:

לולי יהוה שהיה לנו יאמר נא ישראל
לולי יהוה שהיה לנו

"If we had not had JHVH—Israel should say;

If we had not had JHVH"—

or in 129:1, 2.

It will be clear, then, that if the terminology of classical rhetoric be employed, all the cases of *repetitio* cannot be described as coming under any one of the special heads, but several varieties of the general figure may be distinguished, or at least it may be said that something analogous to the constructions employed by the Greek and Latin writers is to be noted; e. g., *Anastrophe* (the case in which the last word of a sentence, clause or verse is the first word of the next) occurs in 122:2, 3; *Anaphora* or *Epanaphora* (i. e. repetition of the same word at the head of successive clauses) is to be noticed in 124:3, 4, 5; 122:8, 9; 128:5^b, 6^a; 133:2, 3; while 122:4 שְׁבִטִים שְׁבִטִי יָהּ "the tribes, the tribes of Jah"—may be an example of *Anadiplosis* (repetition of a single word in immediate succession), a term which Baethgen (*Commentar*, p. xx.) thinks applicable to the structure noticed by Gesenius. *Olmaz* or *Epitoke*, to which Gesenius, Ehrt and Delitzsch liken the figure, does not appear.*

It is likewise clear that the definition given by Gesenius is not applicable to all these cases. The mere recurrence of a word or phrase does not mark the passage as an illustration of the structure. Thus Delitzsch is certainly not justified in claiming as examples such instances as 132:2^b, 5^b where the phrase *Mighty One of Jacob* is repeated at the end of the third verse subsequent to the one in which it first appears; or 132:9, 16, these two verses being parallel passages in the prayer and the antiphonal response, and verse 16, by almost literally repeating the phraseology of verse 9, emphasizes the idea of a literal fulfillment of the petition. Nor can 127:3, 4; 128:1, 2; 134:1, 2; 120:2, 3, in all of which the repeated expression is found in the second member of the second verse, be properly included among cases of the peculiar rhythm. If repetition alone be the requisite essential to the existence of the structure, then the title, in case it has the reference alleged, ceases to be distinctive, since the great majority of Psalms might then be fitly termed "Songs of Degrees;" for the repetition of a key-word is, like parallelism, an essential element of poetry, being a common rhetorical device to secure attention to the primary thought, or to fix the thesis asserted in the mind of the hearer or reader. Thus in 121:5sq. the frequent reiteration of the word *keep* שָׁמַר and of *JHVH* arises from the desire to lay stress on the idea of divine protection from the dreaded evils; as here preservation is the key-word, so in Ps. 122 peace and prosperity form the inspiring theme.

Again in many places, where owing to the repetition of some expression the figure might seem to occur, the phenomena may be explained as due to reasons other than that of artistic composition according to the formula of this figure. In several of the Songs antiphonies are to be observed; thus in the case of Ps. 121, the alleged most perfect example of the degree-like structure in this little Psalter, representation of a dialogue in vv. 1-4 necessitates question and

* Cf. the example in the Mishnic Tract *Pirgê Abôth*, 4:12; also Rom. 5:3sq.; 8:29sq.; Joel 4:4.

response in language only formally different; so v. 2, spoken in reply to v. 1^b, takes up the last words of the preceding hemistich:

אִשָּׁא עֵינַי אֶל הַהָרִים מֵאֵין יָבֵא עֲזָרִי
עֲזָרִי מֵעַם יְהוָה

1, *I raise my eyes towards the mountains;*

Whence will my help come?

2, *My help comes from JHVH.*

And in a similar way in the second stanza v. 4, which voices a sentiment in strong opposition to that in v. 3, repeats the concluding phrase of that verse. It is noteworthy that no such verbal connection exists between the two stanzas. Also in Ps. 134, v. 3 is spoken in response to the address in vv. 1, 2.

Parallelism of the ordinary sorts seems to have been the operating influence in the following passages: Ps. 126:6; 124:4, 5, 7; 125:2; 123:2; 128:1, 2, 4, 5, 6; 127:3, 4; 132:13, 14; 130:5; 120:5, 6; 123:3, 4; 127:1. In addition to these the following instances of parallelism occur: 120:2, 5; 121:5, 6, 7; 122:7; 125:4, 5 (antithetic); 126:2, 5 (antithetic); 127:2; 128:3; 129:2 (antithetic), 7; 130:2; 131:1; 132:2-7, 15, 17, 18 (antithetic). This eminent characteristic of Hebrew poetry is therefore not thrust into the background by some new structure, but maintains its importance here as elsewhere.

In two passages repetition seems to be due to an explanatory marginal gloss that has crept into the text; in Ps. 131:2, the words כִּנְמַל עָלַי נִפְשִׁי *Like a weaned child is my soul within me*—constitute simply an exegetical note on the verse; and in Ps. 133:2 the same is true of the phrase: זָכֵן אַהֲרֹן שִׁירְד עַל פִּי מְדֻתָּי *the beard of Aaron that flowed down to the collar of his garment*.

Thus by far the greater number of the verses claimed by Gesenius and Delitzsch as examples of the structure they describe find explanation in another way. Those that remain do exhibit a peculiar form of which there will be occasion to speak presently; but they are too few to give character to the book. This fact alone is enough to confute the idea that a title was given these Songs because of a peculiarity in the structure of the verses. But this is not all; for the title, if it is to be explained as Gesenius suggested, would not be distinctive, since numerous examples of a structure the same as that in the few verses just alluded to, are to be found elsewhere in the Psalter, and in other books of the Old Testament.

Those who uphold the theory have already observed that the structure they describe is a characteristic feature of the *Song of Deborah* (Judges 5) and have noted other examples, as e. g. Isa. 17:13 and 26:2 sqq. But there are many other poetic passages that conform precisely to the conditions laid down in the definition. A fitting example is Ps. 29; here repetition for the sake of emphasis is noteworthy in the case of the theme קוֹל יְהוָה *the voice of JHVH*, which occurs

seven times in the eleven verses of the poem; but this sort of reiteration is altogether unlike that in vs. 1, 2:

הבו ליהוה בני אלים הבו ליהוה כבוד ועז הבו ליהוה כבוד שמו
Give to JHVH—O ye sons of the mighty!
Give to JHVH glory and strength!
Give to JHVH the glory of his name!

or that in v. 5:

קול יהוה שבר ארזים וישבר יהוה את ארזי הלבנון
The voice of JHVH breaks the cedars,
Yea, JHVH breaks the cedars of Lebanon—

or in vs. 8 and 10. Here may be seen the construction of which Gesenius took note; v. 2 borrows its opening expression from the second hemistich of v. 1, which in turn is in part a reproduction of the first hemistich; each half-verse is something of an advance over its predecessor, so that the whole has not inaptly been compared to a terrace-like ascent in thought. The general form of structure of which the above is a special type is, therefore, fitly termed *climatic parallelism* or *ascending rhythm*.*

Several varieties of this construction may be distinguished: (1) as in the Psalm just quoted, one of the prevailing forms which it assumes consists of the repetition of some element of a preceding στίχος or hemistich in combination with a fresh expression complementary or descriptive, in the verse or member following;† this is an especial feature in the *Song of Deborah*, Judges 5: cf. v. 4^b

ארץ רעשה גם שמים נטפו
 גם עבים נטפו מים
Earth trembled, and the heavens dropped,
Yea, the clouds dropped water.

* Cf. S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, New York, 1891, p. 341.

† Interesting examples of this construction occur in Assyrian Literature; thus in IV: 1* 9^a sq. are found these lines:

munaššir šamē u erḡitīm šēdu munaššir māti
 šēdu munaššir māti ša emuqāšū šaqā
 ša emuqāšū šaqā tallaktašū šaqāt.

He who rends heaven and earth, the demon who rends the land,
 The demon who rends the land, whose powers are exalted,
 Whose powers are exalted, whose course is on high.

Also the following passage from the *Descent of Istar*, IV: 31, 12-15:

Ištar ana bāb erḡit la tārāt ina kašādīša
 ana qēp bābi amātu(m) izākar
 qēp mē pitā bābka
 pitā bābkama lūru ba anāku

When Istar arrived at the entrance to the land whence there is no return,
 She addressed the porter:
 O watcher of the waters, open thy gate!
 Open thy gate that I may come in.

Cf. likewise the *Koran*, Sura 96.

There is also some analogy between this and the so-called concatenary construction in Vedic poetry. This consists of the repetition at the beginning of a stanza of some expression occur-

v. 5

הרים נולו מפני יהוה
זה סיני מפני יהוה אלהי ישראל

The mountains quaked before JHVH

That Sinai before JHVH, God of Israel.

Cf. also vs. 7^b, 11, 18, 19, 20–24, 28^b, 27, 30; the same construction is found in Isa. 26:5, 6; Ps. 96:18; 97:5; 98:5; 10:9; 35:10; 135:12; 115:12; Isa. 17:12, 13; and the poetic fragment Judges 15:16:

בלחי החמור חמור חמרתים
בלחי החמור הכיתי אלף איש

With the jaw-bone of an ass—a heap, two heaps—

With the jaw-bone of an ass I smote a thousand men.

Somewhat analogous to this is the form of expression noticed by Canon Driver (*Introduction*, p. 122) as one of the peculiarities of the *Priests' Code*: "A statement is first made in general terms, and then partly repeated for the purpose of receiving closer limitation or definition;" e. g. Gen. 23:11: *Nay, my lord, hear me; I give thee the field, and as for the cave in it, לך נתתיה לעיני בני עמי נתתיה לך I give it to thee, in the presence of my people I give it to thee,** cf. the other examples he gives (*ib.* p. 122, n. 7) viz., Gen. 1:27; 6:14; 8:5; 9:5; 49:2^b, 30; Ex. 12:4, 8; 16:16, 35; 25:2, 11, 18, 19, etc.

(2) A second variety comprises those cases in which the flow of the sentence or verse is interrupted, usually by a vocative, and then in resumption the words already spoken are repeated; so in Ps. 89:52: *אשר חרפו איביך יהוה אשר כי הנה* *With which thy enemies reproach, JHVH, with which they reproach the footsteps of thy anointed (people);* and in Ps. 92:10: *אשר חרפו איביך יהוה אשר כי הנה איביך יאבדו* *For lo, thy enemies, JHVH, For lo, thy enemies will perish;* also in Ps. 98:3; 94:1, 3; 96:7; 118:1; 115:1; 68:25; 77:17; Isa. 26:15; Ex. 15:16^b; Ps. 57:8; Jer. 31:21.

(3) It sometimes happens that a single word or phrase in a verse or hemistich is repeated in the one following, where it serves as the basis or point of departure for the new thought; e. g. Ps. 25:3: *גם כל קוֹדֵךְ לֹא יִשְׁוּ יִשְׁוּ הַבּוֹגֵרִים*

ring at the close of the stanza next preceding; e. g. Rig-Veda I. 82, 1. 2. (Cf. *Rig-Veda, überetzt u. mit Kritischen u. erläuternden Anmerkungen versehen von H. Grassmann, Leipzig, 1877, zweiter Theil*, S. 38):

1. Jetzt will ich Indra's Heldenthaten singen
die ersten, die des Blitzes Herr vollbracht hat;
Er schlug den Drachen, liess die Wasser strömen
und spaltete der Wolkenberge Bäuche.

2. Er schlug den Drachen welcher auf dem Berg lag, etc.

This phenomenon furnishes a means to detect interpolations in the Vedas; if, for example, such a connection as indicated above exists between stanzas 1 and 8 of a poem, the second stanza is presumably an addition inserted by a later hand. I am indebted for the foregoing to Professor Bloomfield.

* Cf. Driver's remarks in his critical edition of the Hebrew text of Leviticus, p. 28 (*ad.* 6:14) [Part 3 of Haupt's *Sacred Books of the Old Testament*].

רִיקָם *Yea, let none that wait for thee be put to shame; let those be put to shame who lie without cause; Ps. 25:7, 8: According to thy kindness do thou remember me, JHVH, לַמַּעַן טוֹב יְהוָה טוֹב יִישָׁר יְהוָה for thy goodness' sake! Good and upright is JHVH; Ps. 51:19; 98:1, 2; 94:2, 8; 96:13; 9:17, 18; 11:4, 5; Isa. 9:2; 26:3, 4.*

The construction is, as Driver observes, of comparatively rare occurrence and all but peculiar to the most elevated style; and it should be added, is one of the oldest forms of Hebrew poetry.

In the so-called *Songs of Degrees* the following verses illustrate this sort of parallelism: under variety No. 1 belong: 120:5, 6; 123:3, 4; 122:4, 5; 126:2, 3; 130:6, 7 (corrected text); 124:4, 5; 130:5, 6 (corrected text); under No. 2 belong: 124:1, 2; 129:1, 2; and under No. 3: 122:2, 3; 120:6, 7; 124:7; 130:7, 8; 134:2, 3. In all 27 verses of 8 Psalms (or, if 121:1, 2 and 3, 4 are to be included in class No. 3, 31 verses of 9 Psalms) may be considered as examples of this structure; but, as remarked by Driver, the examples are in several cases much less forcible and distinct than those met with in other parts of the Psalter; so especially 121:1 sqq. Here, as elsewhere, the construction is confined to two or three verses in a Psalm. It is clearly not a characteristic of the booklet as a whole.

THEORY C.

THE TITLE A LITURGICAL NOTE.

That the title may be a liturgical note or direction is one of the possibilities which an investigator would naturally take into account, since it is suggested by the analogy of other headings which obtain most satisfactory explanation in this way; e. g. the title of Ps. 80, שִׁיר חֲנֻכַּת הַבַּיִת *A Song of the Dedication of the Temple*—alludes, not to an event in the life of David, but to the occasion on which in later days the Psalm was publicly recited (cf. *Soferim* 18:2) viz., on the anniversary of the dedication of the temple by Judas Maccabæus (1 Macc. 4, 52 sqq.); cf. *τὰ ἐγκαίνια*, John 10:22; Ps. 92, entitled שִׁיר לַיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת *A Song for the Sabbath-day*, is an instance (the only one in the Hebrew Psalter,) of a Psalm appointed to be used in public worship on a specified day of the week;* finally, directions to the chief-musician are quite frequent.

Many commentators have therefore offered explanations based on the assumption that the obscure title is of this nature. Rabbi Saadya Gaon, who renders the words *tashbîḥûn lillâhi biraḥ'î sautî* *Praise to God with a loud voice*, conceived of the phrase as referring to the tone of voice in which the Psalms should be chanted, apparently supposing that a higher key was intended to be used. Of the same opinion were Calvin† and Luther; but the latter adds his own idea that the Songs were so named because “sung in an elevated place, a higher

* In the LXX. notices similar to this are prefixed to several Songs, viz., 24; 38; 48; 96; 94. Cf. Driver, *Introduction*, p. 349, and A. Neubauer, in *Studia Biblica*, II. (Oxford, 1890), p. 5.

† *Commentarii in librum Psalmorum*; Amstelodami, 1687, III., p. 473.

choir (hence his translation: *Ein Lied im höhern Chor*), by the priests or Levites (of whom there were 24 orders), perhaps choir over choir." In support of this is quoted the passage 2 Chron. 20:19, where it is said that the Levites stood up to praise God בקול גרול למעלה with a very loud voice; but here, as the punctuation shows, מַעֲלָה (= מעל + ה directive) is a different word from Ma'âlâh.

Ibn Ezra conjectured that Shîr Hamma'âlôth may have been the opening words of a song to the tune of which the Psalms were to be chanted. But if such were the case, there would be expected the presence of a preposition before the phrase as in other titles which, though many of them are obscure, seem best explained as denoting the tune or instrument to be employed; e. g. in Ps. 8:1; 81:1; 84:1: עַל הַגִּתִּית to (the tune or music of) the Gittith; in Ps. 4:1; 6:1: בַּנְּנִינֹת with stringed instruments; in Ps. 80:1: אֶל שִׁשְׁנִים עֲרוֹת to (the tune of) "Lilies, a testimony;" cf. 60:1; 45:1; 69:1; in 22:1: עַל אֵילַת הַשָּׁחַר to (the tune of) "the hind of the morning;" or at least לַמְנַצֵּחַ to the chief musician, would be prefixed as in Pss. 57, 58, 59, 75, where the words that follow, אֶל תִּשְׁחַת do not destroy—perhaps signify a tune named from the first words of a song* for which it was originally composed.

According to Luther, some explain the Songs as "Psalms of rising up" from the notion that they were sung at the end of the services, when the congregation was dismissed. But Ma'âlâh does not convey any such idea.

Another more fanciful supposition (quoted by Clarisse) attributes the title to the circumstance that the rendition of the Songs in the services was accompanied by the music of a stringed instrument on which the hand of the player ascended or descended; while yet another conjecture of Jewish origin makes the phrase a compendium for שִׁיר מֵאָה עֹלוֹת "A Song of a hundred holocausts," i. e. sung on the occasion of such an offering.

THE SONGS OF THE STEPS.

A Jewish explanation (found in Saadya and evidently formulated at a much earlier time), which has some degree of plausibility, is quoted by David Qamchi (1155-1235) in his note on Ps. 120.† "It is said that the Levites repeat them (i. e. the Songs) on the fifteen steps in the mountain of the temple between the court of Israel and the court of the women, by which they ascend from the court of the women to the court of Israel, and they repeat one Song on each step." Similarly Grätz thinks the title was conferred for the reason that the Psalms were sung on the fifteen steps of the inner court by the Levites in the nights of the Feasts of Booths, to heighten the joy at the ceremony of the water-libation; for the express purpose of such use the Songs were collected in one book. This idea

* Cf. W. B. Smith, *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, 2d ed., p. 209.

† אמרו כי היו אומרים אותם הלויים בחמש עשרה מדרגות שהיו בהר הבית בין עזרת ישראל לעזרת נשים שהיו עולים בהם מעזרת נשים לעזרת ישראל ואומרים שיר אחד במעלה אחד.

appears to be based on a passage in the Mishnah, *Succah*, 5:2 (cf. *Middoth* 2:5) where, in the description of the services during the Feast of Booths, it is said: "pious and respectable men danced with torches in their hands and sang songs of praise, and the Levites accompanied them with harps and numberless instruments of music.* On the fifteen steps, which led down from the court of the men to that of the women, corresponding to the fifteen *Ma'âlôth* in the Psalms, the Levites stood with instruments of music and sang." The words, "corresponding to the fifteen *Ma'âlôth* in the Psalms"—must, it appears, be regarded as a parenthesis, while the words following them resume the interrupted narrative. From this parenthesis it would seem that the fifteen steps in the temple were thought to have been built to correspond with the fifteen songs†; it is neither said nor implied that the Psalms were so named because sung on the steps. The Mishnah merely notes a parallelism in number between the Songs and the steps, without asserting the employment of the Psalms in the service or giving an explanation of the name. But the passage may have given occasion for the rise of the idea. The translation of the LXX. *ψαλμὶ τῶν ἀναβαθμῶν* (Vulgate: *canticum graduum*) might be taken as indicating that, at the time this version was prepared, the view that the Psalms were "Songs of the Steps" was in existence; but, on the other hand, it may be urged that the LXX. simply attempted to give a literal translation, and had in this case, as in the matter of other titles, no clear view of the meaning.‡

The title given in the Targum, **שִׁירָא דִּאתָאמַר עַל מַסְקִין דְּתְהוּמָא** "The Song which was sung at the rising of the deep"—has been thought to refer to a tradition which is found in the *Gemara* of the Talmud. In the Talmud *Jerushalmi*, *Sanhedrin* X., 29a, it is related that when David was digging the foundations of the temple, and had dug to a depth of 1500 cubits without reaching the bottom of the abyss, he found a fragment of pottery; he was about to remove it, when it warned him to desist, saying that when the earth was shaken and broken by the thunder of God's voice on Sinai, it was placed here to restrain the deep, which would otherwise submerge the world. David did not heed the warning, and immediately the deep threatened to inundate the world. Ahitophel, who stood by, rejoiced, supposing that David would be destroyed, and that he would obtain the throne. But, alarmed at a threat of David, he told what would obviate the danger. David then commenced to repeat these Songs, one Song for each hundred cubits the deep had risen, and the threatened evil was averted. Ahitophel, in spite of his timely suggestion, was strangled.

* על חמש עשרה מעלות היורדות מעזרת ישראל לעזרת נשים כנגד חמש עשרה מעלות שבתהילים שעליהן ליום עומדין בכלי שיר ואומרים שירה.

† Cf. the Apocryphal Gospel of the Birth of Mary, VI. 1: *Erant autem circa templum iuxta quindecim graduum psalmos quindecim ascensionis gradus*. Now there were about the temple, according to the fifteen Songs of the Steps, 15 stairs to ascend.

‡ Cf. Cheyne, *Origin of the Psalter*, p. 60.

Sukkoth, 53*, contains a slightly different account, according to which the deep first rose, then sank below its normal level, but was restored to its usual height when David repeated the Songs. The fabulous character of the story is too obvious to require remark.

Among the many curious theories put forward, it is not surprising that one involving mathematics occurs. This is given by Hitzig (after Venema) who thinks that, according to the use of *Ma'âlâh* in the Old Testament, only actual steps can be meant; and, taking his cue from the Mishnic passage quoted above, he supposes the steps of the temple* are referred to. From Ezek. 40:6, 22, 26-31, 34, 37, it is clear that even at the time of the first temple, the ascent to the outer court was made by seven steps, and from this to the inner court by eight. It will be noticed that Ps. 120 consists of seven verses, Ps. 121 of eight, as though the former was meant to serve as an entrance to the outer court, the latter as an entrance to the inner. Then there were ten steps leading up (Ezek. 40:49 LXX.) to the porch in front of the temple. Now Pss. 120-129 were perhaps all of them composed by a single author and formed an independent booklet. Pss. 120 and 121 might readily receive the title "Song of the Steps" on account of their respective lengths; perhaps the writer purposely limited the number of verses they should contain and prefixed to them the title. Then a collator applied the name to the other Psalms of the group, making each serve as a step; finally a second redactor, influenced by the same consideration that procured a name for Pss. 120 and 121, extended the use of the title to Pss. 130 sqq. which came immediately after the original group in the Book of Psalms.

The explanation is ingenious, but arbitrary and artificial. While an author might capriciously bestow a title on his work in the way indicated above, yet it is improbable. The (author or) authors of these Psalms had more serious matters to occupy their attention than the whimsical idea of correspondence between the number of the verses and of the steps. And if the first person was so much influenced by his knowledge of the construction of the temple as to give a meaningless title to a portion of his work, he would certainly have seen the possibility of extending the same title to the remaining portion.

SONGS OF THE FEAST-JOURNEYS.

According to the theory which is now generally accepted, this booklet received its name from the fact that the Songs contained in it were employed by companies of pilgrims on their way to the Holy City to keep the great annual feasts.

* Cf. Hippolytus, *Fragmenta in Psalmos*, Migne's *Patrol. s. Gr.*, Vol. 10: *πάλιν τε αὐτοῦ εἰσὶ τινες τῶν ἀναβαθμῶν ψαλμοὶ, τὸν ἀριθμὸν πεντεκαίδεκα, ὅσοι καὶ οἱ ἀναβαθμοὶ τοῦ ναοῦ, τάχα δηλοῦσαι τὰς ἀναβάσεις περιέχεσθαι ἐν τῷ ἑβδόμῳ καὶ ὀγδόῳ ἀριθμῷ*: "And again, there are also certain others called Songs of the Steps, in number fifteen, as was also the number of the steps of the temple, and which show thereby, perhaps, that the steps are comprehended within the number seven and the number eight."

This was the opinion of Agellius (d. 1608) and Venema (1697-1787), and the majority of more recent writers strongly commend it.*

Ma' 'lâh would then mean *feast-journey*, a usage of the word which, though without example, is possible, since the verb **עלה** is regularly employed in speaking of such ascents to Jerusalem; cf. 1 Kgs. 12:27, 28;† Zech. 14:16; Ps. 122:4. The use of Ma' 'lâh in Ezra 7:9 of Ezra's journey from Babylon to Jerusalem, taken in connection with the meaning of the verb, seems to justify the usage of the noun (1) of any ascent to Jerusalem, then (2) as *terminus technicus*, of the pilgrim-journeys in particular.‡ This can be maintained however only as a possibility. The plural Ma' 'lôth would then be explained as referring to the three great annual feasts§ (so Hupfeld). But W. R. Smith (*Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, 1. ed. p. 415, n. 7), adopting the idea (first proposed by Ewald, *Dichter d. Allen Bundes*, 1866, I. 1, p. 252) that the title could not have been originally prefixed to each Psalm, explained the phrase as a singular not very correctly formed from a previous collective title **שירי המעלות** *The Songs of Ascent*. More correct seems the idea supported by Cheyne (*Origin of the Psalter*, p. 59 note) that **שירי המעלות** = **שיר המעלות**, and is the same idiomatic construction as in the phrase **בית האבות** *ancestral houses*. The title thus belongs to the collection.¶

Since no argument, except that of possibility, can be drawn from the words of the title, the necessary proof to establish the theory must be derived from other sources. And first, facts are adduced to show that the existence of Songs intended for use on the pilgrim-journeys is probable. According to the Law (Ex. 23:14-17; Deut. 16:16), thrice in a year all the males of Israel were required to appear before JHVH: at the feasts of unleavened bread, of weeks and of tabernacles. It may safely be assumed that pious adherents of the faith, desirous of attending these festivals in Jerusalem, would assemble in companies in order to make the journey with greater convenience and safety. In view of the analogous customs of other peoples,** both Aryan and Semitic, it is not unlikely that the

* So Herder (*Geist der Hebräischen Poesie*), Ewald, Hengstenberg, Hupfeld, Reuss (*Geschichte der Heiligen Schriften alten Test.*, Braunschweig, 1890, § 410), T. C. Murray (*Origin and Growth of the Psalms*, New York, 1890, pp. 294 sqq.), J. J. S. Perowne (*Book of Psalms*, London, 1883, p. 600), Cheyne (*Origin of the Psalter*, p. 51), W. R. Smith (*Old Test. in the Jewish Church*, London, 1892, p. 208), E. Kautzsch (*Die Psalmen Uebersetzt*, Freiburg i. B., 1893).

† **אם יעלה העם הזה לעשות זבחים בבית יהוה בירושלם** : *If this people go up to offer sacrifices in JHVH's temple in Jerusalem, etc.*

‡ Or even of the pilgrim-caravans; cf. Cheyne, *Origin of the Psalter*, p. 59.

§ The idea of Thenius, who understands by Ma' 'lôth the stations, or stopping places along the route of ascent, is untenable both because there is no evidence that such stations existed, and because **מָסָעִים** (cf. Ex. 17:1, where this word means *station*) or **מַעְמָרִים** (Isa. 22:19) must then have been used.

¶ Cf. note † p. 27.

** Cheyne (*Origin of the Psalter*, p. 51) instances the case of the Russian pilgrims in Palestine; T. C. Murray (*Origin and Growth of the Psalms*, p. 294 sq.) supposes the Jewish feasts were not unlike the Greek games and afforded the motive for many literary works that have been lost. "Around such gatherings there always grows up a luxuriant ballad poetry, and our collector has gathered from it some of the choicest of those which were connected with their religious observance."

pilgrims sang songs on the march or around their camp-fires, though the passages (Isa. 30:29; Ps. 42:5) brought forward by Hupfeld and Moll do not establish this, since both refer simply to the music of festive processions in the Holy City.

Special emphasis is laid upon the character of the Psalms themselves. Indeed, if these fifteen pieces are a compilation of hymns designed for use on the pilgrimages, or selected as suitable for these occasions, it is reasonable to expect that they should give indication of such nature or fitness. This, it is said, they do, being eminently fitted for such use by their brevity (except Ps. 132) and the nature of their contents, especially the reference to Jerusalem as the religious center (122:4; 125:1, 2; 132:13), and the exhortations to unanimity and fraternal feeling which occur again and again.* Moreover some of the Psalms seem to have been written expressly for the pilgrims; thus Ps. 121 is regarded as aptly expressing the sentiments of a pilgrim as he comes in sight of the mountains of Jerusalem :†

I will lift up mine eyes to the mountains;
Whence will my help come?
My help comes from beside Jehovah
Who made the heaven and the earth.
He cannot suffer thy foot to waver,
He that keeps thee cannot slumber.
Behold he that keeps Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep—

While in Ps. 122 is celebrated the joyful entrance of the company through the gates of the city:

I was glad when they said unto me,
“Let us go into the house of Jehovah.”
Our feet stand at last
Within thy gates, O Jerusalem.

In the opinion of advocates of the theory these two Psalms are distinctive in their character and indicate the design of the whole collection. But it is at the same time acknowledged that a large number, even most, of the Songs were written with reference to definite historical events and had originally nothing to do with the feast-journeys. Thus Hupfeld claims but five Songs (120–122, 133, 134) as peculiarly suitable for use on these marches; five others (124, 126, 128, 129, 132) he thinks have contents more or less in agreement with what is

* It was, of course, important that those associated in these journeys should live at peace among themselves, avoiding quarrels and evil speaking; cf. the *Koran*, Surah II. 193:

'elhajju ashhura ma'umâta faman farada fihinna 'lḥajja falâ rafata ualâ jadâla fî 'lḥajji = “The pilgrimage must be made in the known months: whoever therefore purposes to go on pilgrimage therein, let him not know a woman, nor quarrel in the pilgrimage.” The months meant are Shawwâl, Dulqâda and Dulhejja.

† The translations here are taken from Cheyne.

demand, while the remaining five (123, 125, 127, 130, 131) are of a more general nature, each having the character of a popular song, such as might well find a place in a pilgrim's song-book. Hengstenberg, who assigns the anonymous pieces of the group to the period of restoration after the Exile, thinks allusions to the woes of the time would be expected even in Songs intended for the pilgrims.* It is possible that pieces originally written with regard to the peculiar circumstances and needs of the congregation at some particular time, were afterwards used for a purpose wholly different from that which the authors had in mind to serve, since on account of their general tone of piety and devotion they were appropriate to any religious occasion. And it is conceivable that such Psalms might find their way into a collection of pilgrim-songs. But, in order that the collection may receive the title, it seems necessary that it should contain Songs which demand interpretation as "Songs of feast-journeys," in number and importance sufficient to impart character to the whole. This requirement is not met here.

Out of the five or six Songs, which commentators are accustomed to explain as "pilgrim-songs," four (120, 125, 133, 134) contain not the slightest allusion to a feast-journey, and any attempt to connect them with such an occasion seems unnatural and in the case of 120 and 125 is clearly not justified by the contents. In like manner, there is no indication that pilgrims were in any way concerned with the composition or rendition of 134. Ps. 133—*How sweet and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in complete harmony*—may obtain some sort of illustration in the assembly of co-religionists at Jerusalem, or in the gathering of pilgrims from various sections around a common festive board; but the language suggests rather a reference to fraternal feeling and action in daily life, in all matters, domestic, civil and religious. Even Pss. 121 and 122, so often brought forward as establishing a firm basis for the theory, do not receive adequate explanation when interpreted in this way. The former Psalm was in all probability written in contemplation of a journey to Jerusalem, while the statement in verse 3 of the latter, *Our feet stand at last in thy gates, O Jerusalem* (Cheyne)—suggests an arrival in that city; but reference to a feast-journey is excluded by the terms of the description in 121, for the proposed undertaking is an unusual one, attended with great danger and even risk of life. In 122, a piece of much point and vigor, the theme is personal prosperity to be secured by maintenance of the peace and welfare of the city; in brief, the Psalm consists of an earnest

* This theologian, by an ingenious hypothesis, attempts to preserve the genuineness of the titles of Ps. 122, 124, 127, 131, 133. These, he supposes, were written by David and Solomon for the pilgrims, and were made the basis of a series designed for the same use after the Restoration. The post-exilic author added ten Psalms of his own in a studied and artificial manner, so that the Psalm of Solomon stands in the middle of the group, with two Psalms of David on either side. The hypothesis is far fetched and unnatural, and flatly opposes the evidence in the Songs.

appeal, supported on either side by potent arguments arranged in series so as to reach a powerful climax in the personal example of the author; and the position of verse 2 (which like verses 1 and 3 suggests a contrast with a past condition of affairs directly the opposite of that in the present) is that of a link in the chain of argument, introducing one of those elements of the present situation upon which the writer desired to lay stress, as it formed a strong reason why his hearers should heed his intreaty; an appeal of this nature might be addressed to pilgrims, but clearly its most natural and direct application is to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

The argument for the theory from the contents of the Psalms is therefore nil.

Least of all can it be claimed that the contents of this little Psalter exhibit an arrangement in series so that, as Agellius thought, the gradual approach of the pilgrims to the city and temple is indicated; thus it is said that in Ps. 121 the pilgrims see the hills of Zion before them, 122 marks the arrival at the gates of the city, while 134 is the address of the pilgrims to the priests in the temple. The notion immediately falls to the ground when a general application of it is attempted; for what stage of the journey does e. g. 123, 124 or 126 mark?

THEORY D.

THE TITLE A HISTORICAL NOTE.

The theory that this title is an index to the historical events that occasioned the composition of the poems, has obtained but two developments.

1. *Songs of Hezekiah.*

While the general opinion of both ancient and modern exegetes has been that the historical background of the majority of these Songs is to be found in the post-exilic period, there has lately appeared a new work which places it in the times of Hezekiah. Abraham Wolfson* (in his Dissertation: *The Shadow of the Degrees or the Writing of Hezekiah* *צל המעלות או מכתב לחזקיהו*, Warsaw, 1882) finds in the poems allusions to the great events of this monarch's reign. Thus he thinks such passages as 120:5 and 126:4, where distresses are pictured, when taken in connection with the representation of Jerusalem as in splendid condition and of the temple-services as conducted with regularity (122:1 sqq.; 134), can be explained only of the captivity of the ten tribes; this idea is confirmed by the fact that the name Israel alone is used in these Songs, and that the Israelites are represented not as having returned, but as crying to God in distress. The lying lips and deceitful tongue mentioned in 120:2 aptly describe the cunning means employed by the Assyrian general sent by Sennacherib to terrify and seduce the inhabitants of Jerusalem (2 Kgs. 18:17 sqq.). Wolfson regards these Psalms as

* Attention has been paid here to this writer's theory simply because he furnishes a type of modern Jewish exegesis.

the Songs spoken of in the *Song of Hezekiah* (Isa. 38:20*), which he considers authentic, and thinks they were composed by Hezekiah concerning the captivity of Israel; the sign granted to the king as the assurance of recovery from his serious illness suggested the title "Songs of Degrees" (cf. 2 Kgs. 20:11 and Isa. 38:8), while the number of years added to his life (2 Kgs. 20:6) corresponds to the number of the Psalms. In the composition of these poems the pious monarch had in view their use in the services of the temple which he had re-established; and Wolfson supposes that they are arranged in order according to their fitness to be employed at certain hours of the day: thus 120, which refers to the captivity of Israel and the distress of Judah, is the prologue to the collection; 121 is the song of the morning; 122 describes the soul's longing for the house of God; 123 is a prayer; 128, a song of eating; 130, a prayer at the Mincha-offering; 132, a song of public rest; 133, a song of domestic rest; 134, an evening prayer.

Whatever may be said of the authenticity† of the *Song of Hezekiah* (Isa. 38:9 sqq.), the passage Isa. 38:20 offers no foundation on which to rest a theory concerning supposed literary productions of this pious king. This passage reads thus: *וַנְּנִינֹתַי נָנִן כָּל יְמֵי חַיִּינוּ*; in the first place *נְנִינֹתַי* means not *my songs* but *stringed instruments*; the ending *ַי* is not the pronominal suffix of the first person singular, which would hardly be consonant with the plural in *נָנִן* and *חַיִּינוּ*, but a denominative ending.‡ The meaning is clear in the note appended to the Psalm in Hab. 3:19: *לַמְנַצֵּחַ בְּנְנִינֹתַי* *To the chief musician, to the accompaniment of stringed instruments*; cf. the similar directions to the leader of the choir in Pss. 4:1; 6:1; 54:1; 55:1; 67:1; 76:1. *נָנִן* also does not mean *sing*, but is the technical term used of playing on such instruments; cf. e. g. 1 Sam. 16:16; Isa. 23:16; Ezek. 33:32; Ps. 33:3; 2 Kgs. 3:15. So that the clause must be rendered: *and we will play on stringed instruments all our lives*.

That the passage cannot be used to prove that Hezekiah wrote songs is clear. But, even admitting that he was a writer, there seems to be no reason sufficient to justify assignment of these Psalms to him, or to unknown writers of his time.

* Cf. the translation in the A. V.: *therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments*.

† Delitzsch (*Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, Edinburgh 1890) accepts it as Hezekiah's work. So apparently Dillmann, *Der Prophet Jesaja*, Leipzig, 1890, and von Orelli, *Die Propheten Jesaja u. Jeremia*, Zw. Aufl., München, 1891. But Cornill (*Einführung in d. alt. Test.*, Freiburg, 1891, p. 146) rejects it on the grounds that nothing in the poem characterizes the author as a king, or shows that his sickness happened at a great crisis or that his recovery is a pledge of better times; and on closer examination it is seen to be not a thanksgiving but a prayer. Had it been an authentic Song of Hezekiah it is hard to understand why it was omitted in Kings, especially since in this book are found two prayers of Solomon, all the long speeches of prophets and even a prayer of Hezekiah. In language and thought it shows a striking similarity to Job and the later Psalms. B. Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja*, Göttingen, 1892, p. 255, on account of the language, assigns it to a position among the latest pieces of the Old Testament.

‡ Cf. Ewald, *Lehrbuch*, Göttingen, 1870, § 164, p. 429 n., and B. Stade, *Lehrbuch der Hebr. Grammatik*, I., Leipzig, 1879, § 301a. But Dillmann regards *ַי* as the pronominal suffix and takes *נָנִן* to mean the music and the song it accompanies; so von Orelli; Duhm rejects the suffix as superfluous.

Wolfson lays great stress on the difficulties that would arise in case the Songs are regarded as written to be sung by the Jews on the occasion of the return from Babylon in 537; and with reason. But these difficulties are not such as to compel the commentator to seek the historical background in the times following the exile of Israel (721). On the contrary, when an explanation is attempted on that basis, yet greater difficulties present themselves, which can only be met by exegesis inconsistent with the plain meaning of the Psalms.

The writer of Ps. 122 looks back upon a time when the kings of David's line sat on the throne; but there is nothing in the Psalms to indicate that a Judean monarch is at present in authority, while from Ps. 125 it seems clear that a foreign yoke now rests upon the land; and in 132 the restoration of David's dynasty is made the subject of earnest prayer and solemn promise. It is clear from repeated references in the Songs that a great calamity has but recently reached an end, and the people are struggling with difficulties that have arisen in part on account of a lack of fraternal spirit in some members of the community, as well as against the bitter opposition of their neighbors. This picture does not suit the time of Hezekiah.

Wolfson emphasizes the use of the name *Israel* in these Psalms. But this term, though to be sure sometimes used to denote the people of the ten tribes (1 Kgs. 15:31), may mean the true Israel, the church of JHVH (Ps. 73:1), and is employed in speaking of the colonists in Judea after the Exile (Ezra 2:59; 10:1; Neh. 7:61). And while it is true that Israel is represented as in distress (Ps. 130), yet two Psalms (124, 129) clearly show that this people has recently experienced a great deliverance; this was not true of the ten tribes at the time in which Wolfson supposes the Songs were written; he is therefore obliged to interpret 124 and 129 as referring to the deliverance of Judah, but at the same time, he makes 130 a prayer of the Israelites in captivity.

In several cases his interpretation destroys the unity of the Songs. Thus, he says that Ps. 120:1-4 tells of the means employed by Sennacherib's officer to induce the people of Jerusalem to yield to the great Assyrian King; but in verse 5 the subject is totally changed and the scene transferred to the distant lands where the ten tribes languish in exile. This sudden change, for which there is no preparation whatever in the Psalm, is necessary in order that Wolfson may find an explanation, but it involves a grave literary fault of which the author of the Psalm was certainly not guilty. Similarly in Ps. 126 he thinks that verse 1 is spoken by the Israelites in captivity who have heard of the wonderful deliverance of Judah in the days of Hezekiah, and who now in verse 4 beseech that a like mercy may be granted to them. But logical interpretation demands that the speakers of verses 1 and 4 be also those who speak verse 3 and of whose good fortune the nations remark (in verse 2); and with this, Wolfson's labored inter-

pretation falls to the ground; for the Israelites had no cause to rejoice at such a signal manifestation of divine favor to themselves in the days of Hezekiah.

Finally, his supposition that the Songs were intended to be used in the temple service at certain hours of the day is very fanciful and arbitrary, and involves a disregard of the actual purposes of the poems. Ps. 121, for example, which he thinks is a song of the morning, contains so little that might in any way indicate this, that exegetes who regard these as pilgrim-songs, entitle it "an evening-song of the feast-journeys." The purpose of Ps. 122 is not to illustrate intense longing for the house of God, but to secure peace in the city by an appeal to the religious as well as the patriotic feelings of the citizens.

2. *Songs of the Return (from the Exile).*

One of the oldest explanations is that which connects these Psalms with the ascent from Babylon to Jerusalem after the close of the Captivity. In the three Greek versions of the Old Testament, prepared in the second century after Christ, the translations of the title seem to indicate that this idea was present to the minds of the translators; thus Aquila and Symmachus render the phrase by ἄσμα εἰς τὰς ἀναβάσεις (in the case of Ps. 120 as though here the Hebrew read: שִׁיר לַמַּעְלוֹת as in 121:1), or ἄσμα τῶν ἀναβάσεων (in 122, 123, 127, 131, 132), which is also given by Theodotion. But, though ἀναβαῖν and ἀνάβασις are used of the ascent from Babylon on the Return,* yet since the terms do not necessarily have such a connotation, but might be used of any journey to Jerusalem (cf. Ps. 122:4), it would not be just to conclude that these renderings are indubitable evidence that the translators interpreted the Psalms as Songs of the Return. But in any case the interpretation goes back to the early centuries of the Christian era. It first finds definite expression in the notes prefixed to the Psalms in the Syriac Version (commonly called the *Peshitā*); thus for example the title of Ps. 120 reads: תְּשׁוּבוֹתָא קְדָמִיתָא דְּמִסְקְנָא מְצֵלָא עִמָּה דְּבִבִּיל דְּנִתְחַרֵּר. The first Song of the Ascent; the people in Babylon pray that they may be set free;" Ps. 121 is aptly entitled: דְּמִן מִסְקְנָא דְּמִן בִּבְלִי נְבִיטָא דְּעַל פּוֹנִיָּה דְּעַמָּה: "Of the Ascent from Babylon; a prophecy concerning the ascent of the people from Babylon." In like manner notes are prefixed to Pss. 122, 123, 126, 127-133. But in the case of 134 both the title* is wanting and the explanatory note does not refer the piece to the time of the Return.

Of the Greek Fathers, Chrysostom thought the Psalms were so-called (i. e. *Songs of the Ascents*, ᾠδὴ τῶν ἀναβάσεων) because they treat of the Ascent from Baby-

* Cf. Ezra 1:2: ἀναβαίνοντες = those returning; Ezra 7:9: τὴν ἀνάβασιν τὴν ἀπὸ βαβυλῶνος; Ezra 1:3; 7:6; Neh. 7:5, 6, 61.

* It is somewhat surprising that the translation of the title differs in the case of the different Psalms; thus in Ps. 120: תְּשׁוּבוֹתָא קְדָמִיתָא דְּמִסְקְנָא; in 121: מִן מִסְקְנָא דְּמִן בִּבְלִי; in 122, 123, 126-130, 132, 133: מִן מִסְקְנָא; in 131: מִן דְּמִסְקְנָא; and in 134: מִסְקְנָא. It is hard to say to what these differences are due.

lon and make mention of the Captivity in that place; though, taken in the mystical sense, they lead to the path of virtue.* Similarly Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrus (390-451) remarks (*Interpretatio in Psalmos*, ad Ps. CXIX., in Migne's *Patrol. s. Gr.*, Vol. 80) that: "the ascents or steps set forth the ascent of the people who had been in captivity, from Babylon." One Psalm tells of the misfortunes in Babylon, another the good news of the Return, and another the joy on the journey; one tells of the wars that took place after the Return, another of the building of the temple."† Also Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 429), the exegete *κατ' ἐξοχήν* of the Syriac Nestorians, assigns 14‡ of these Psalms together with 25 other pieces in the Psalter to the Chaldean period and the Return from Captivity; e. g. he makes Ps. 121 refer to the return and the admonition to the people and to everyone; 122 was "spoken in the name of the nobles who returned from Babylon;" 123 refers to "the people in Babylon in so far as they in faith supplicated deliverance from those who had carried them away."‡

Of more recent writers who have held similar views may be mentioned Tilling (*Dissertatio de XV Psalmis graduum*), whose ideas were largely adopted by Rosenmüller; and Ewald (in the first edition of *Die Dichter des Alten Bundes*, 1835-1839).

While the interpretation of the exegetes mentioned is in many points unsatisfactory, especially with regard to the historical references of the individual Songs, yet their general idea, that these Psalms were composed in the times of the Return and the Restoration, and that to this circumstance they owe their title, seems correct. For the meaning which the title must then have is supported by the actual language use, and the Songs themselves obtain most natural and fitting explanation when referred to this important epoch in the history of Judaism; so that the theory as to the sense of the phrase *Shîr Hamma'âlôth* which might reasonably be formed from external considerations, is confirmed by the evidence in the little Psalter itself; in the case of no other theory has this been found true; here only does possibility become probability.

* Cf. his words quoted above, p. 6.

† *Δηλοῦσι μέντοι αἱ ἀναβάσεις, ἡ οἱ ἀναβαθμοί, τοῦ αἰχμαλωτευθέντος λαοῦ τὴν ἀπὸ βαβυλῶνος ἐπάνοδον* * * * *ὁ μὲν τὰς ἐν βαβυλῶνι συμφορὰς, ὁ δὲ τῆς ἐπάνοδου τὰ εὐαγγέλια· ὁ δὲ τὴν κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν εὐφροσύνην· ἄλλος τοὺς μετὰ τὴν ἐπάνοδον γεγενημένους πολέμους· ἕτερος τοῦ ναοῦ οἰκοδομήν.*

‡ Ps. 120 was spoken, he thought, by David at the time he was pursued by Saul and was forced to dwell among strangers.

§ The loss of Theodore's Commentary on the Psalms (only fragments of the Greek text have been preserved; cf. Corderius, *Expositio patrum graecorum in Psalmos*, Antwerp, 1643, Tom. I., and Migne's *Patrol. s. Gr.*, Vol. 86) has in part been made good by the discovery of a Syriac MS. now in the Royal Library in Berlin; the document does not, to be sure, literally reproduce Theodore's work, yet since in all cases where it is possible to compare it with the Greek fragments, it faithfully follows the original, so in all cases where such comparison is impossible it may be regarded as a reliable witness to the exegete's ideas respecting the Psalms. Cf. F. Bæthgen, *der Psalmencommentar des Theodor von Mopsuestia in Syrischer Bearbeitung*, in the *Zeitschr. für Alttestamentl. Wissenschaft*, V. (1885), pp. 53 sqq.

In the first place, that Ma'âlâh may refer to the Ascent from Babylon is conceded in view of the fact that the verb **עלה** is regularly employed when allusion is made to this journey; e. g. in Ezra 7:6; 1:3, 5; Neh. 12:1; the participle **(ה)עולים** is used of those who returned in Ezra 2:1, 59; Neh. 7:5, 6, 61; and finally the noun itself is employed in speaking of Ezra's journey (Ezra 7:9). But it is objected (by Delitzsch, Hitzig, Hupfeld, Hengstenberg) that the term could not be used absolutely in the sense of the Return; some more definite form of expression would be necessary, as e. g. **המעלה מבבל** the *Ascent from Babylon*. To this it may be replied that, while to the mind of a scholar of to-day **המעלה** alone might not suggest the idea of the Ascent from Babylon, yet to the Jews of the 5th century B. C. the word describing this important event was no doubt invested with a definiteness that precluded the necessity of adding any qualification to make clear what was meant, just as the *Reformation* conveys but one idea to us; to them it became the Ma'âlâh.

Another difficulty presents itself in the plural Ma'âlôth where the singular might be expected. This was formerly explained of the several different ascents, that of Zerubbabel and his party in 537 and that of Ezra some 80 years later; and the title was accordingly rendered *a Song of the Ascents*, i. e. referring to, or employed in these journeys. But H. Ewald (*Die Dichter d. Alten Bundes*, I., 1, p. 252), followed by W. R. Smith (*Old Test. in the Jewish Church*, 1881, p. 415, note 7) and F. Bæthgen (*Die Psalmen*, p. xx.), supposed that the title was originally the heading of the entire book and that, when the little hymnal was incorporated in the third great section of the Psalter, the compiler prefixed to each Song the name of the collection and at the same time changed the collective designation **שירי המעלות** Shîrê Hamma'âlôth into Shîr Hamma'âlôth so as to adapt it to a single Psalm. This is possible, though it would certainly have been more natural to append to each piece the name of the source whence it was taken. But Paul Haupt, accepting the idea of a collective title, first pointed out (*HEBRAICA*, II., Jan. 1886, p. 98, n. 2) that the phrase Shîr Hamma'âlôth should be rendered *the Songs of the Ascent*, it being, according to a peculiar construction in Hebrew, the plural of a singular* **שיר המעלה**. The plural of a compound idea may be formed in three ways in Hebrew: thus *the Song of the Ascent*=**שיר המעלה**, but *the Songs of the Ascent* may be expressed by **שירי המעלה** (plural in *nomen regens*, which is the normal form), or by **שירי המעלות** (plur. by attraction in *nomen rectum*), or finally by **שיר המעלות** (plur. in *nomen rectum* only).†

* W. R. Smith (Article *Psalms* in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Vol. 20 (1886), p. 32, note 2, and *Old Test. in the Jewish Church*, 1892, p. 208, cf. a Review in the *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, April, 1893, p. 178, by K. Marti) and T. K. Cheyne (*Origin of the Psalter*, p. 59, n. p.) seem to have arrived at the same conclusion independently, but both take Ma'âlâh as meaning *pilgrimage*.

† Other instances of this construction are **בית אבות** Num. 1:2sq.; **בית הבמות** the *houses of the heights*, 2 Kgs. 17:29; **בית עציבהם** their *idol-houses*, 1 Sam. 31:9; cf. also Judg. 7:25:

The title is therefore out of place as the designation of a single Song, and names the collection to which these pieces belong. It must have been prefixed to the several Psalms of the group at a comparatively late period when the term *Ma'âlôth* was no longer understood.

As to the Psalms themselves, their contents bear out the above view of their origin. It is, however, an old and well-founded objection to one phase of the theory, that these could not have been journey-songs used during the Ascent (perhaps by the singers accompanying the party, cf. Ezra 2:65; Neh. 7:67); for several of the pieces, notably Ps. 126, were certainly composed some time after the Return. But the application of the title, *Songs of the Ascent* (or Return; in the nature of the case *Ma'âlâh* would signify both), need not be so exclusive; Psalms written in anticipation of the event, or in description of its successful accomplishment, or pieces that relate to the history of the first period subsequent to the Return, might all be so entitled. Just as the epoch in Jewish history from 538-432 might be fitly called the Era of the Return from the great event which made possible the work of restoration, so the poems that belong to this period may appropriately bear the name. No title more apt, and at the same time so brief, could be found.

It is becoming more and more one of the recognized facts in Old Testament exegesis that the majority at least of these Psalms were composed during the period just mentioned. Several commentators so interpret them; though some (as Rosenmüller, who follows Tiling, *Dissertation*, p. 87) think it necessary to suppose that several of the pieces, viz., those attributed to David (122, 124, 131, 133) and Solomon (127), are of an earlier date, but were worked over to adapt them to the needs of the colony in Jerusalem. Hengstenberg, who is quite certain that the anonymous pieces describe the feelings and fortunes of the returned exiles in their efforts to restore the city and the temple, claims a pre-exilic origin for the Psalms named.

Now in order that the Songs may bear the title, it is needful simply that in their present shape they allude to matters connected with the Return; yet the assumption of older forms of the poems is improbable and superfluous. For, in the case of these five Songs, the names David and Solomon found in their headings cannot be taken as sure evidence of their date, for the LXX. text omits them; and this, it is likely, would not have occurred, if they had stood in the Hebrew text of which the LXX. is a translation, since this version exhibits a tendency to ascribe to David an ever-increasing number of Psalms.* That these names are

וְרֵאשׁ עֵרֶב וּזְמַח and the heads of Oreb and Zeeb. (Cf. Gesenius, *Hebr. Grammar*, 26th edition, §124, 2 c.; Müller-Robertson, *Outlines of Hebrew Syntax*, 2 ed., Glasgow, 1883, §77). The same phenomenon also appears in Ethiopic; e. g. as plur. to *bêta Krëstijân* "church" there occur: *ab-iâta krëstijân*, *abiâta krëstijânât*, *bêta krëstijânât* (cf. A. Dillmann, *Grammatik d. Aethiopischen Sprache*, Leipzig, 1867, p. 384 sq., where other examples are given). In Assyrian also a similar formation is found: e. g. treasure-house = *bit nakantu*, treasure-houses = *bit nakamâte*, V R. 6, 183 sq. (cf. F. Delitzsch, *Assyrische Grammatik*, Berlin, 1889, § 73).

* Cf. W. R. Smith, *Old Test. in the Jewish Church*, 1862, p. 96 sq.

now found in the Massoretic text is perhaps due to the same tendency. Moreover the idea of such authorship does not agree with the contents of the Songs. Thus Ps. 122, on account of the clear reference to the temple as existing, and because of the allusion to the time when David's dynasty sat on the throne, must be assigned to a date posterior to that of David. No such great disaster followed by such a wonderful deliverance as described in 124 took place in the reign of David. While it is easy to see why a scribe might assign 127 to Solomon, yet the interpretation that must be given of it if he is the author is comparatively weak and unsatisfactory. Ps. 131, which is but a fragment, and Ps. 133 contain little to show when they were written, but there is no good reason to make them of Davidic origin; and, on the other hand, a fitting place may readily be found for them in the period of restoration after the Exile.

All great political events call forth poetry. So, too, this period of revival and restoration was productive of Psalms; it was not an epoch in which the poetic art languished so that writers were content to adapt pieces of an earlier date to the needs of the present. Many of the finest poems in the Psalter seem to have been composed at this time.

In the first rank of Songs that belong to the era of the Return and the Restoration should be placed Pss. 85 and 66, of which the latter is a thanksgiving for release from the Captivity, the former a prayer called forth by the troubles experienced in the first years of the colony. The jubilee of praise at the completion of the temple (in 516) found expression, it seems, in Ps. 93, 95-100; Ps. 118 appears to have been composed for the dedication of this building.* Ps. 110, which Cheyne (*Origin of the Psalter*, p. 24) assigns to the time of Simon Macca-beus, may have been written by one of the party which supported the claims of the Davidic prince Zerubbabel against his rival, the high-priest Joshua, proposing that the prince should unite in himself both regal and sacerdotal functions.†

Quite a number of pieces seem to have been composed in the stirring times of Ezra and Nehemiah. Pss. 80 and 51 were probably written shortly before Nehemiah came to Jerusalem. The contempt and mockery with which the Samaritans and others greeted the purpose of the feeble Jews to rebuild the ruined walls is alluded to in Ps. 102. Pss. 22, 69, 32, 35 all describe the distress occasioned by the hostile peoples who, in conjunction with disaffected Jews, sought to hinder the work. Ps. 31 refers to the frustration of the schemes of Sanballat and his confederates. The struggles against false brethren and heathen foes are likewise depicted in Psalms 25, 24, 15, 27, 37 and 34. To these pieces must also be added Pss. 9, 10, 65, 67, 91, 92, 113, 114, which belong in the

* Cheyne (*Origin of the Psalter*, p. 16sq.) denies this on the ground that "the exuberant spirit of independence and martial ardour in the Psalm" does not harmonize with the occasion. But, it must be remembered, at that time the Jews did entertain hopes of the speedy downfall of the heathen, and of the exaltation of Jerusalem under a Messianic prince.

† Cf. Haupt, *Note on Psalm 110*, Johns Hopkins University Circulars, July, 1894, p. 110.

latter half of the 5th century B. C. A little later come the long poems, Pss. 108, 105-107, 78, in which the thought that JHVH has been controlling the fortunes of Israel is strongly brought out.

Some of these pieces may have been included in the original group of *Songs of the Return*.

It now remains to show that each of the fifteen Psalms may be best explained with reference to some historical occasion in the early Persian period. Before proceeding to this, however, it will be useful to briefly sketch the history of these times.

PART II.

HISTORY OF THE EXILE AND THE RETURN.

In the preparation of the following pages the writer has consulted mainly :

B. Stade, *Geschichte des Volkes Israel*, Berlin, 1887-8.

R. Kittel, *Geschichte der Hebräer*, 2. Halbband, Gotha, 1892.

E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, 1. Band, Stuttgart, 1884.

J. Wellhausen, *Israelitische u. Jüdische Geschichte*, Berlin, 1894.

CHAPTER I.

JOSIAH'S REFORMS AND THE DOWNFALL OF THE NATION.

The year 621 marks the beginning of a new era in the history of Israel. Reforms that had long been urged by the prophets were then introduced; but what is of greater importance, this work was based, not, as had been previous efforts of a similar nature, on the preaching of prophets, but on the requirements of a written law which was recognized as embodying the will of JHVH to Israel.

According to the Book of Kings (II. 22:8 sqq.), while at the commands of King Josiah ben Amon (639-608) repairs were being made on the temple, this document was discovered in the building by the chief-priest Hilkiah, who gave it to Shaphan, the royal officer commissioned to institute the work. Shaphan, in making his report, mentioned the discovery and read the book. Josiah, struck by the evident contrast between the worship of JHVH as prescribed in the document and the existing state of the religion, was at once persuaded that the matter demanded serious attention. At the advice of the prophetess Huldah, he called a general assembly of the people in which this "book of the law" was solemnly declared the law of the realm. The new statutes immediately became operative. Idolatry was suppressed in Judah; the worship of JHVH was purged from the contaminations of heathenism, and the temple at Jerusalem made the only sanctuary in the land by the suppression of all other places of worship. The decline of the Assyrian power made it possible for Josiah to extend the reform even beyond the limits of Judah to Samaria and the ancient sanctuaries at Bethel.

The effects of this change were far-reaching and important. It was an attempt to realize the ideal of the prophets: to make Israel the holy people of JHVH. But through the means employed the influence of prophecy was materially weakened. For, if God's will stands recorded in a written law, there is then no need of new revelations through prophets, but only of executives to see that this will is enforced; and this office was naturally occupied by the priests. The prophet himself is a false teacher if his words do not agree with the law.

The customs and affairs of daily life were most deeply affected. Prayer was the only religious exercise permitted in dwellings. The killing of an animal was no longer in itself an offering; this last could only be made at the temple, and considerations of time and expense involved tended to decrease the number of visits a man would make to Jerusalem. So offerings became more infrequent and were made usually at the times of the feasts as the most convenient seasons. With the removal of the local sanctuaries it became no longer possible for a person to obtain advice of a priest or to consult the oracle in his own neighborhood; difficult cases at law must also be referred to the king and priests at Jerusalem. The local feasts gradually ceased after the shrines with which they were connected had been removed; and the three great feasts, Passover, Pentecost and Booths, became the great national festivals which should be observed at Jerusalem. In a word, this city became the religious, as well as the civil, center of the nation.

These results did not make themselves apparent at once; time was required to develop them. In particular, prophecy, whose power was so seriously threatened, stood now at the very summit of its development. Nevertheless, the reform prepared the way for the conditions in the centuries following when the priests were the leaders of the people.

Of the events of Josiah's reign after the reform but little information is given. It would seem that internal peace and happiness were consequent upon the work he accomplished, a fact which strengthened the confidence of his subjects in him. Further, the conviction fixed itself in the minds of the people that, since they were under the protection of JHVH, peace and prosperity were likewise secured for the future. This confidence was soon rudely shaken by Josiah's death.

In the meantime the once mighty Assyrian power had been engaged in a struggle for existence. The successors of Aššurbanipal (668-626) had been obliged to content themselves solely with defensive warfare, not being able to follow up successes when they gained them. The end was nigh. In 608 the combined forces of Babylonia and Media laid siege to Nineveh. At this juncture Pharaoh Necho (610-594), a son of Psammetichus (672-610), seizing the opportunity to appropriate a share in the spoils of the crumbling empire, appeared in Palestine. No opposition stayed his progress until Josiah, with foolhardy valor, met him at

Megiddo (608), where the unequal strife was quickly terminated by the death of the Judean king, whose grief-stricken followers took his lifeless body back to Jerusalem.

This sad and unexpected event filled the hearts of the people with mourning and consternation. Josiah, relying on divine help, had taken the field in defence of the land which, in conformity with the Book of the Law, he had striven to make holy to God; yet disaster had overtaken him. The people naturally compared this disheartening failure, in spite of painstaking compliance with the law, with the peace and good fortune enjoyed in the days of Manasseh (686-641) and Amon (641-639), when the sins now put aside were prevalent. Many drew from this the conclusion that JHVH was powerless to help against the heathen gods, and accepted these deities as more potent guardians. But a large number of the people, following the teachings of the priests and prophets, saw in the misfortune a trial imposed by God, which would be followed by the triumph of his cause, and they looked for some yet more signal manifestation of his power than that given in the discomfiture of the Assyrians in 701. This opinion, though it might have been termed pious, was nevertheless plainly at variance with the signs of the times; and it found a brave opponent in the prophet Jeremiah.

Necho, apparently satisfied with his victory, had continued his march northward. But he still gave heed to the course of affairs in Judah; at the end of three months he deposed Jehoahaz (who had been placed on the throne by the Judean army) and made his eldest brother, Eliakim (or as Necho named him, Jehoiakim), king (608-597) in his stead; Jehoahaz was taken to Egypt, where he died, though, it would seem, not until after the fall of Jerusalem. The tribute imposed by Necho was collected by Jehoiakim from the wealthier classes of his subjects (2 Kgs. 23:33 sqq.). This inauspicious initial act of his reign was followed by others that tended to increase his unpopularity; he seems to have been of a despotic temperament and fond of splendor, not the sort of ruler Judah needed at this time.

The opening years of his reign were comparatively quiet after the excitement caused by the event of 608 had abated. Confidence in the security of the state under JHVH'S protection was again restored by the preaching of numerous prophets; and the fall of Assyria strengthened the hope that deliverance from all enemies was at hand. But two men at least raised their voices against the popular idea. Uriah of Qirjath-Jearim (cf. Jer. 26:20 sqq.), for his bold condemnation of Judah's shortcomings, was sentenced to death, but escaped to Egypt; Jehoiakim procured his extradition and carried out the sentence. At one of the great feasts, Jeremiah entered the temple and sternly exhorted the people to amend their conduct, threatening as the penalty JHVH would inflict for their sins, the destruction of the temple and the desolation of the city (Jer. 26). In the uproar occasioned by this unwelcome declaration the prophet's life was endan-

gered, but he was rescued by the intervention of royal officers. In spite of threats and abuse he did not remain quiet, and in the stormy times that presently came on found frequent occasion to reprove and advise his people.

After the fall of Nineveh (607 or 606), the conqueror, Nabopolassar, sent his son Nebuchadrezzar to wrest from Egypt the territory which this rival for power in Western Asia had seized. In the decisive battle fought (604) at Carchemish on the Euphrates, Necho was totally routed, and the Syrian states came under the dominion of the Chaldeans.

The fear that Nebuchadrezzar would now besiege Jerusalem moved the authorities to appoint a special fast-day that the misfortune might be averted. Jeremiah, unable to be present on this occasion, sent the scribe Baruch to the temple with a scroll containing his prophecies (cf. Jer. 36:2 sq.). The royal officers, who were assembled at the palace, were informed of the occurrence in the temple, and had Baruch brought before them; they were terrified at the words he read and, giving him a hint to keep in hiding, reported the matter to the king. Jehoiakim in anger cast the scroll into the fire and sought, but in vain, to arrest Jeremiah and Baruch. The prophecy which so excited the king seemed to have been that relating to the desolation of Judah by the Chaldeans (Jer. 1:15; 4:5 sq.). This anticipation of Jeremiah was not immediately realized; but after several years spent in the vain hope of obtaining complete independence, Jehoiakim yielded without attempting resistance (600).

Egypt, though so quickly driven from Syria, did not give up the hope of empire in Western Asia, and now sought to use the states of Palestine in her contest with Babylon. Judah, heedless of Jeremiah's warning, allowed herself to be drawn into an alliance, and in 598 Jehoiakim revolted; this ill-advised act invited Judah's ruin (2 Kgs. 24:1 sq.).

The king of Egypt was unable to send the promised assistance; the Chaldean garrisons, with the help of the Syrian peoples who remained loyal to Babylon, prevented any concerted action on the part of the allies and confined Jehoiakim to Jerusalem; so Judah was left alone to face the storm her folly had brought on. Nebuchadrezzar himself came with his army to inflict signal punishment on the rebellious nation. But the sudden death of Jehoiakim saved him from the Chaldean's wrath. His son and successor Jehoiachin quickly saw that resistance was useless, and closed his brief reign of three months by an unconditional surrender. Nebuchadrezzar now adopted the means employed by the Assyrians to break the nation's power and to secure himself from further trouble in this quarter; not only Jehoiachin and his court, but also the flower of Judah's population, together with 1000 artisans, in all at least 8000 men, were deported to Babylonia; naturally the families of these captives accompanied them; with them also went the priestly prophet Ezekiel. The temple was spoiled of a part of its furnishings. The peasants entered into possession of the estates, and

Mattaniah, a younger son of Josiah, was placed on the throne to have authority as a vassal of Babylonia under the name of Zedekiah (2 Kgs. 24:8 sqq.).

This well-meaning but weak and indolent king was not the man for the occasion; he lacked the decision and courage which would have made it possible for him to have ensured the continuance of Judah's national existence. Moved on the one hand by the wise counsel of Jeremiah, he feared the plottings of those unfit and selfish persons whom the social revolution occasioned by the deportation in 597 had elevated to the position of nobles in the land. The worst traits that had characterized court-officers in former years appeared in these new officials in an aggravated form (cf. Ezek. 22:25, 27; 24:6), and acts of violence and bloodshed were committed. Soon, too, the old mistake of looking to Egypt for help began to be made anew, and it was expected that Babylon would fall as Assyria had done. To the people in Jerusalem it seemed that in the disaster of 597 JHVH had exhausted his wrath and had punished the guilty with captivity; in a short time he would turn to his people with salvation, and relieve them from the yoke of Babylonian supremacy by destroying the power that had seized the anointed king and violated the sanctuary. Jeremiah sternly met this popular view with the reply that those left in the land were far worse than their unfortunate fellow-countrymen and must experience further punishment, while out of the faithful in Babylonia God would in time to come make to himself a people. (Cf. Jer. 24; 29:10 sqq., 16 sqq.). But the voice of the patriot prophet was drowned in the chorus of prophets who proclaimed deliverance at hand.

In Babylonia also the same doctrine became current among the captives, who were slow to accustom themselves to their new circumstances and conditions and longed to return. To them the wickedness and disorder prevailing in Jerusalem were positive proofs that those left in Judah had brought on the disaster by their guilt. The feeling engendered by this idea was deepened into hate by other thoughts; the aspersion cast on the captives by the people in Jerusalem (Ezek. 11:15), who seemed to have a better fortune than their deserts warranted, provoked bitter recrimination. Moreover Zedekiah was not regarded as the rightful king; the sympathies of the nation in captivity were with the unfortunate Jehoiachin; Zedekiah was merely a Babylonian vassal. Ezekiel shared these feelings of his companions. Like Jeremiah, he threatened the inhabitants of Jerusalem with complete ruin on account of their sins, and comforted the exiles with the promise of return to their father-land (Ezek. 11:5 sqq., 16 sqq.). His prophecy, however, that JHVH would return to Jerusalem only to destroy the place, aroused, it seems, anger and even violence, so that he was obliged to give up public activity, and retired to Tel-abib on the canal Chebar (Ezek. 3:24 sqq.). From this place, by the messages he sent forth through the elders who came to visit him (cf. c. 8:1; 14:1; 20:1), he exercised some influence,

inconsiderable as compared with that of the prophets who promised the speedy fall of Babylonia.

The state of affairs in Jerusalem rapidly grew worse. Political corruption, evidenced by violence and bloodshed, was accompanied by increased defection from the worship of JHVH, who had now again, it seemed, "left his people in the lurch" or else proved his inability to help in time of need. According to Ezekiel's description (c. 22), vice of the worst sort prevailed; and the prophets, so far from attempting to check it, in many cases furthered it by their own mischievous example (Jer. 29:21 sqq.). Especially did they instill into the minds of the people the delusive idea of security and the notion of rebellion against Babylonia. This teaching presently yielded fruit in action.

When Jehoiakim revolted he stood alone; but now a desire for independence seized all the states of Palestine. Messengers from Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon (Jer. 27:8 sqq.) came to Zedekiah and, representing that Babylonia must soon fall, asked him to enter into alliance with them. Jeremiah flatly contradicted their assertions, and warned Zedekiah and the people not to listen to them, as well as to turn a deaf ear to prophets like Hananiah (Jer. 28:1 sqq.), who persisted in declaring that the Babylonian yoke would soon be broken. He also endeavored to disabuse the minds of the exiles of the fond hope of immediate return, counseling them to settle down quietly and peaceably and to seek the good of the place where they were (Jer. 29:1 sqq.). His advice was unfortunately not taken.

Some time elapsed before the fatal step was made; and when finally in 588 the outbreak against Babylonia took place only the Ammonites and Tyre were in league with Zedekiah. Nebuchadrezzar seems to have been in no haste to suppress the revolt. But in January 587 he appeared with his army before the walls of Jerusalem, and constructed siege-works about the city (2 Kgs. 25:1). This event filled the hearts of the people with terror. Fearful lest in some way they had offended God, they sought to make atonement; and king and people, at the instance of Jeremiah, in accord with a solemn agreement freed all their slaves of Jewish birth (Jer. 34:8 sqq.). The defence of the city was stubbornly maintained, so that the siege was protracted to an unexpected length.

In February or March the wished-for help from Egypt appeared; Hophrah (or Apries, 589-570) invaded Palestine. To meet and crush this foe Nebuchadrezzar was obliged to temporarily raise the siege. The wildest enthusiasm then pervaded the city; in the excess of foolish exultation and arrogant pride, the people forced their recently liberated slaves back into servitude. This unjust act called forth words of indignant remonstrance from Jeremiah, who declared the city would soon be taken and the inhabitants suffer a fearful fate (Jer. 34:18 sqq.). In similar stern language he replied to a deputation of priests sent by Zedekiah to inquire whether JHVH would interpose with a miracle to save Jerusalem;

JHVH, said he, will deliver the city to the Chaldeans; continued resistance invites death, submission will save your lives (Jer. 37 and 21). The royal officers, incensed at these words, arrested the prophet as he was on his way to his native village of Anathoth and thrust him in prison. His words soon obtained fulfillment.

Nebuchadrezzar routed* the Egyptians and returned to the siege. The lines of investment were drawn closer and closer around the doomed city. The courage of the garrison began to fail; famine and pestilence did their deadly work. Finally on the 9th of July, 586, the enemy made a breach in the walls through which the soldiers entered, killing and committing outrages. The Idumeans and other tribes accompanying the Chaldeans stole the treasures and desecrated the temple. Zedekiah with the energy of despair sought to escape; he succeeded in passing the lines of the foe, and hastened toward the Jordan, but was overtaken in the plains of Jericho. His troops dispersed through the country; and he was taken to Nebuchadrezzar to answer for his offence. After witnessing the execution of his sons he was blinded and carried in chains to Babylon (2 Kgs. 25:3 sqq.; Jer. 39:2 sqq.).

For the space of a month the city was given up to plunder and violence; then Nebuzaradan, chief of Nebuchadrezzar's body-guard, came to inflict the penalty prescribed by the conqueror. The city and temple were burned; the remaining temple-treasures were carried off to Babylon. Those nobles who had taken a prominent part in the rebellion, together with 60 men of the common people, were taken to Riblah and executed. The greater portion of the people were transported to Babylon; only the very poorest were allowed to remain, and the land was portioned out to them (2 Kgs. 25:8 sqq.).

Out of the wretched fragments of the once important nation the Chaldeans tried to organize a small state. Gedaliah ben Ahikam ben Shaphan, a member of the party which had opposed the revolt, was appointed governor with Mizpah as his capitol. He endeavored to restore peace in the land and to induce the scattered fragments of Zedekiah's army, which were carrying on a sort of guerrilla warfare, to submit to Babylonia. But his efforts to form a state were unsuccessful, though the soldiers were persuaded to settle down to works of peace, and the fugitives, who had taken refuge in neighboring countries, returned. The jealousy of Ba'alis, king of Ammon, was aroused; and he found a ready tool in a Davidic prince, Ishmael, who for private reasons was willing to murder Gedaliah. Warning was given the governor, but it was unheeded. Two months after the destruction of Jerusalem Ishmael came to Mizpah with ten companions and was hospitably entertained. But during the meal he killed Gedaliah; the soldiers in the town were also slain (2 Kgs. 25:22 sqq.). Two days later eighty

* According to Josephus, *Ant.* X. 7:3, Hophrah was defeated in battle, but from Jer. 37:7 it appears that he fled in fear, not daring to engage the foe.

men, on their way to visit the ruined temple at Jerusalem, were invited into Mizpah by Ishmael, and all but ten, who gave ransom, were treacherously murdered (Jer. 41:4 sqq.). Ishmael then fled toward Ammon, taking with him as prisoners the people of Mizpah. News of these events quickly spread; and in the valley of Gibeon Ishmael was overtaken by Johanan at the head of a large force. The captives, among whom was Jeremiah,* were rescued but the murderer escaped. Fear of Nebuchadrezzar's vengeance now moved Johanan's party to flee to Egypt. Jeremiah, whose advice was asked, strongly urged them to remain in Judah; but his words were unheeded, and they went, taking him with them (Jer. 41:10 sqq.; 42; 43:1 sqq.).

The colony in Egypt was already a large one, and the social and literary surroundings were favorable. But vice was prevalent, and Jeremiah's voice was soon raised to denounce the idolatry of his people (c. 44). Again his efforts were unavailing. The exiles refused to hearken to the commands of JHVH, and thus lost all that would have assured to them a part in the promised reconstruction in Jerusalem. The larger part of the colony soon perished; some few persons, among them Baruch, went to Babylonia.

With this exodus to Egypt, the nation of Judah passed out of existence.

CHAPTER II.

THE EXILE.

The Exile was such more in name than in nature. The people were transported to Babylonia, not separately, but in families, and were able to preserve their family and tribal formations in their new homes. Moreover they formed, to be sure with certain limitations, a national unit, managing their affairs in accord with their own law, and thus preserving their national customs. The fate of Judah differs from that which Samaria suffered in 721 (2 Kgs. 17:6 sqq.), in that the deportation was not confined to the inhabitants of the capital city, as indeed it might have been had not Nebuchadrezzar's patience been too sorely tried. The punishment inflicted in 597 was repeated again and again; and the population of the country was yet further reduced by emigration, "so that finally Babylonia was the country in which sojourned not only the best, but also the most compact and most numerous part of the nation, while the parts sojourning outside of Babylonia represented only fragments which were no longer able to exercise an influence on the further development of the people."[†]

Nor may the residence of the people of Judah in Babylonia be called a captivity. Jehoiachin and Zedekiah were imprisoned, as well as perhaps other prominent offenders. But great freedom was allowed the mass of the people.

* At the fall of Jerusalem he was captured and taken to Ramah, but was set at liberty, whereupon he joined Gedaliah in Mizpah (Jer. 40:1 sqq.).

† Stade, *Geschichte Volkes Israel*, II., 5.

They were obliged to settle in specified places in and around Babylon; yet they could devote themselves at pleasure to the acquisition of property, a privilege of which not a few made good use; agriculture seems to have been the favorite occupation. The people were free to visit one another, and a lively correspondence was carried on with their relations and friends in other lands.

Contact with the high type of civilization and culture which then distinguished Babylonia could not but have a considerable effect on the strangers. Here was nurtured and developed, if not born, that instinct and aptness for trade which has so markedly characterized the Jew since his residence in this great center of commerce. Babylonian literature, art and science, as well as Babylonian religion, attracted attention and were studied. The influence of Babylonian religious customs* upon the Jewish ritual forms an interesting theme which is only beginning to be investigated and discussed. It is a question in the minds of scholars whether some of the Hebrew Psalm-writers have not borrowed phraseology from the Babylonian penitential hymns.†

These favorable conditions of life were offset by the forced lapse of religious customs that had become closely interwoven with the affairs of every-day life. Sacrifices could be offered to JHVH only in his land and in his temple. The feasts also could not be kept. In brief, those rites with the practice of which the holiness of the nation was inseparably connected had to be omitted, so that Israel stood before the nations in a state of impurity under the wrath of God. Hence arose a feeling of sadness and oppression, and an intense longing for the father-land.

Attempts were made to practice these rites. Some persons even resumed the ancient custom of worshipping images of JHVH, and Ezekiel found it necessary to reprove them (cf. c. 20:30 sqq., 39). Many allowed themselves to be drawn away to idolatry.

The fall of Jerusalem shook most violently the religious faith of the exiles. It was hard to reconcile the facts with the idea of God's righteousness and power. How could a man put confidence in a deity who had thus suffered his city to be captured and his temple to be destroyed? It was right that, as the prophets had threatened, punishment should overtake the guilty; but also, if God is just, forgiveness should be granted to the penitent. But now it seemed that, in this catastrophe following so closely on the reforms of Josiah, the righteous had suffered, though the guilty Manasseh and his subjects had enjoyed good fortune. It did not help matters to say that an inheritance of guilt rested

* Cf. Prof. Haupt's remarks in his paper on the *Origin of the Pentateuch*, *Am. Or. Soc. Proc.*, May, 1894, p. ciii., Note *.

† Cf. Prof. Francis Brown's paper in the *Presbyterian Review*, Jan., 1888, pp. 68-96 (Vol. IX., No. XXXIII.: *The Religious Poetry of Babylonia*. Prof. Delitzsch has announced a paper on that subject.

on the present generation for which the penalty must be paid (cf. Ezek. 18; Jer. 31:29 sq.). So that there could be no wonder if some lost faith in JHVH.

But at the same time the great national disaster was a confirmation of prophecy, and a vindication of God's righteousness. For two centuries the prophets had been declaring this would come to pass on account of the sins of the people; and now that it had happened all opposition to the claims of the prophets was silenced. If the very temple itself had been involved in ruin, it was but an indication that JHVH abhorred what was done in it. Those who still clung to their faith in JHVH were compelled to recognize that the judgment which the prophets made of the past was correct, and that only in accord with the ideas advanced by prophecy could the way to a better future be prepared. This acceptance of prophetic views was the first step toward the formation of Judaism.

In this new movement the leader was Ezekiel, the spiritual father of the exiles, who, it appears, began again to preach publicly after the fall of Jerusalem; to his influence may be ascribed the renunciation of the ideas which had prevailed in the past, and the confident anticipation of a time to come when Israel would again stand in favor with God. Through his preaching the idea gradually won acceptance that JHVH, though he had been justly incensed at the constant rebellion of Israel, was nevertheless inclined to mercy; for he takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but desires that by repentance and fulfillment of the requirements of his law the guilty offenders shall obtain life. Out of free grace God is ready to establish forever the covenant which he made with Israel in her youth (c. 16), and which was so shamefully broken by her. He will lead his people through the desert to the place he has chosen, and will purge out from among them all the rebellious and disobedient (c. 20:35 sq.).

The partial fulfillment of prophecies aroused expectation that the remaining predictions would also be verified; and the people looked for the dawn of the Messianic time. This hope was strengthened by Ezekiel. JHVH, he declares, will take his sheep away from the shepherds who have abused their charge, and will pasture them on the mountains and in the valleys of Canaan, carefully tending them himself. By his wise arrangement of the internal affairs of the flock, the invidious class distinctions will no longer produce mischief; the common people will no longer be oppressed by the nobles. A son of David will act as shepherd (נָשִׂיא i. e. prince), to lead the flock under the guidance of God. The Edomites and other heathen tribes who entered into possession of parts of Judah when the captivity occurred, will be destroyed, and the land will be thickly settled with the people of Israel. It may be true that Judah was broken and scattered, that the people as a whole is dead; the fragments existing in Babylonia may be like the dried bones of a corpse, so that nothing short of a new creation will answer the needs of the case. But JHVH will clothe these dried bones

with flesh and sinews, and fill them with fresh life and energy. The whole house of Israel will be revived; Judah and Ephraim will form one people under a king of David's line with JHVH as their God. As the last element in this plan of the Restoration, the prophet shows the people how to avoid incurring God's wrath in the future and how to perform the duty set before them, to maintain themselves the holy people of a holy God (c. 34-37).

Jeremiah had declared the temple should fall since it might become a cause of superstition (c. 7:11 sqq.). But with Ezekiel the house of JHVH is the center of the religious life of the people. He makes most careful provision, however, that from it and from the immediate neighborhood should be removed everything impure or profane, everything that might stain the purity of the place or offend the eye of God. Only the priests of Zadok's family could approach the altar; the other priests, since they had made themselves impure by officiating at the high-places, were deprived of the right of offering sacrifices, and became Levites, the servants of the priests of Jerusalem (c. 44).

The land of Palestine was to undergo a wonderful change to prepare it for the reception of the twelve tribes (c. 47). This and kindred ideas of Ezekiel with regard to the Messianic time was frequently repeated by post-exilic writers. The prince who was to stand at the head of the re-organized community would not have the functions or characteristics of former rulers. He would not be the supreme judge, since the Law, explained by the priests, decided in every case. Nor would he lead the armies of Israel; for in the Messianic time Israel would live in peace under the protection of JHVH. But he would retain the duty of maintaining the rites of the temple; and the people would not suffer from unjust exactions at his hands (c. 45:7 sqq.).

In this time JHVH would dwell among his people; and all that might pollute the sanctuary or the people must be avoided. Further, the rites would serve the purpose of preserving the sanctity of Israel and the temple, and of atoning for any profanation that might inadvertently be incurred. Offerings in atonement for the sins of individuals had been made from very remote times, but now sacrifices for the sins of the whole people were definitely prescribed.

After Israel had for some time enjoyed the blessings of this happy period, the nations would make a general attack on the holy land and the new Jerusalem, only to meet, however, a crushing defeat. For JHVH would annihilate them, and thus remove the reproach cast on his name by the heathen who, pointing to the disaster of 586, alleged that he was unable to defend his people (c. 38; 39; cf. c. 25-32).

To be sure, many of Ezekiel's expectations were not realized. But his work was fruitful. The influence of his ideas is plainly seen in the subsequent legislation promulgated by Ezra. Out of his theology sprang the thoughts which caused and controlled the development of Judaism.

The first half of the Exile, though fraught with much that was of importance for the future of the people, seems to have been comparatively uneventful. In 570 Ezekiel's activity ceased, but the work he had begun appears to have been carried on by his disciples.

The conditions of the exiles from 570 to 540 appear to have remained the same. The historical books of the Old Testament give no direct information concerning the period. But at this time, it is thought, there took place a redaction of the historical works then existing on lines consistent with the view of the past entertained by the Deuteronomist* and Ezekiel. The Exile was a period of reflection. The prophetic writings had obtained favor and inspired interest because of the fulfillment of prophecy. Under the influence of these writings, of the Book of the Law and Ezekiel, thinking men in Israel had come to regard the fall of the state as the penalty for ignoring God's word; and they looked upon the past as a time of constant transgression of the law and of continual rebellion against God, which had terminated naturally in national ruin. They now looked forward to the time when, with the wisdom begotten of experience and the safeguards provided for the future, they would dwell in harmony with God's requirements in the land of their fathers. About the middle of the century there began a commotion among the nations of Western Asia that seemed to promise the realization of this hope.

Nebuchadrezzar's long reign came to a close in 561, and Evil-Merodach ascended the throne. Jehoiachin, who had been in chains for 35 years, was now released and received kinder treatment than was accorded his fellow-prisoners (2 Kgs. 25:27 sqq.). Evil-Merodach, on account of his injustice and debauchery, fell a victim to a conspiracy headed by Neriglissar, a son-in-law of Nebuchadrezzar, who now seized the kingdom. Upon his death in 556, his son, because of his youth and bad traits of character, was murdered by the nobles, who placed one of their number, Nabonidus, on the throne. This last king of Babylon reigned from 555 to 539. In the opening years of his reign, Cyrus, king of Anshan, a small province in the mountains east of Susa, extended his dominion over Persia, and ultimately (in 549) succeeded in taking the capital of Media. The allies of the Medes, alarmed at this unexpected event, determined to take the field against Cyrus. But in the struggle Croesus of Lydia was left alone; for Babylonia afforded little assistance, while Egypt and Sparta came to his aid too late. Cyrus quickly defeated the Lydian troops in spite of their brave resistance, and captured Sardis in 546. Greece stood in awe of the conqueror, and the Greek colonies in Asia Minor were allowed to fall into his hands. Cyrus now busied himself with establishing his rule over the newly

* The author (or authors) of the Book of the Law discovered in 621; so designated because his work seems to have consisted of what now forms the body of Deuteronomy, i. e., roughly speaking, chs. 5-26 and 28.

acquired territory, that he might presently be free to attack Babylonia. Nabonidus employed the time thus given him in rebuilding and strengthening his fortresses.

While the Jews in Babylonia watched the course of events with anxious longing, yet few of them perhaps expected what would be the final outcome of the strife, nor the important bearing it would have on their destiny. This was first proclaimed to them by the great prophet of the Exile, whom it has become customary to designate as the Deutero-Isaiah.

This messenger came, not as the pre-exilic prophet with a condemnation of sin and a call to repentance, but with an unique message of comfort and hope. The dawn of salvation, he declares, is at hand; God will again receive his people into favor and lead them back to Jerusalem. The victorious Cyrus is the instrument which JHVH has created to accomplish this gracious purpose, and the successes which have crowned the Persian monarch's efforts are but proofs that God's power is with him, working to bring about fulfillment of the prophecies concerning Israel's future (Isa. 40:1 sqq.; 45:1 sqq.).

These thoughts the prophet grounds on his view of the history of the nation, in which he recognizes that JHVH's hand has been determining the destiny of his people.

Moreover JHVH, recognized as the God of prophecy and of history, becomes to him the only God, he who created and maintains the world. Every movement in the world that suggests superhuman power must be traced back to Israel's God. With this view of the Deity, the Deutero-Isaiah formed a new foundation for the religious faith. Who could think it impossible that such a Being should overthrow the mighty Babylonian Empire and restore Israel in Jerusalem? Fresh courage was thus given to the timid and the voice of doubt was silenced (Isa. 40:12 sqq.). The skepticism of those whose hope of release had so long been fruitless was confuted by the same argument (c. 40:27 sqq.). JHVH had supported Israel in the weakness of infancy and would now support him in old age.

Again, if this omnipotent and omniscient Creator has chosen and cared for Israel, it has been done in order that Israel's history might bring the nations to know and reverence JHVH. The chosen people must preach to all nations just as the prophets have preached to Israel. There appears in the work of the Deutero-Isaiah, as nowhere else in the Old Testament, a broad and exalted conception of the part Israel, the "servant of God," should play in the world (Isa. 42:1-6.).

The intended salvation will be brought about first because, as Jeremiah once prophesied (c. 18:18), Jerusalem has received double punishment for all her sins (Isa. 40:2); but also, as Ezekiel had said, the honor of God's name was at stake and for his own sake JHVH will restore Israel (Isa. 48:9 sqq.).

Israel will return to Palestine through the desert, with JHVH at the head of his people, as when he brought them out of Egypt. Miracles will be done in order to prepare the way. A wonderful change will take place in the appearance of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. On account of the worship of JHVH Israel will be honored and served by the nations. But the uncircumcised and unclean will not again enter Zion; another conquest by the heathen need not be feared. While Ezekiel would carefully separate the chosen people from the defiling contact of the heathen, Deutero-Isaiah conceived that all liability to injury from such a source would be removed, for the nations would unite with Israel in a kingdom of God; Zion would become a house of prayer for all peoples. It is noticeable that the prophet makes no provision for an earthly king; JHVH is Israel's king (Isa. 41:21).

It would seem that the prophet addressed his comforting assurances to a despondent people, the continued failure of whose hopes had made them unwilling to repose confidence in new promises. But as time passed on and events began to confirm his words, another extreme of feeling was reached and, in lively expectation of deliverance, some impatiently sought to hasten the glad day by their own good works; so that he had to preach in the style of the earlier prophets against such mistaken behavior (Isa. 58).

But some not only believed in the possibility of the Return, but were even inquiring how the affairs of the new community should be regulated. The prophet sought to quiet the apprehensions of the eunuchs in particular (Isa. 56:1sq.), who feared that they would be excluded from the congregation (cf. Dt. 23).

The progress of events speedily proved the correctness of the prophet's interpretation of the signs of the times. After the subjugation of Asia Minor, Cyrus turned his attention to Babylonia. His approach was welcomed by the Jews, who saw in him the warrior of the Lord who had come to destroy their enemy. Cyrus had no difficulty in overthrowing Nabonidus. It seems not unlikely that a large party, among others priests* whom Nabonidus had offended, were ready to act in the interest of the invader. Sippara was taken, and Nabonidus fled to Borsippa, where he was captured. The gates of Babylon were opened to the Persian army by the inhabitants. Four months later (Nov. 538) Cyrus himself entered the city. But the expectations of the Jews that a terrible punishment would now be inflicted on the Babylonians were disappointed; the conqueror contented himself with ensuring his authority by placing a Persian garrison in the place.

The liberal policy adopted by Cyrus secured for the Jews the boon they craved; he permitted them to return, and favored and helped them in the work of reconstruction. In doing this he was moved, not by reverence for JHVH, but

* Cf. the remarks of Dr. J. Dyneley Prince in his dissertation on *Mene mene Tekel Upharsin*, Baltimore, 1893, p. 54.

by political considerations. By establishing in a remote quarter of his domain a commonwealth which owed its existence to his power, and was dependent on him for its continuance, he thought to strengthen his empire, since this people, by reason of community of interests, should act in his favor. There was no reason to fear that they would revolt; but rather it was to be expected that they would remain faithful in order to have protection against their enemies on all sides.

CHAPTER III.

THE RETURN AND THE RESTORATION.

Concerning the events of the period of the Return and the Restoration very meagre information has been handed down; and the existing fragments of historical works that seem to have contained the records, now unfortunately lost, are so disposed in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah that it is difficult to obtain a reasonably correct view of the times. It is here impossible to enter into a discussion of all the critical questions that arise; it must suffice to state what appear to be the best attested results of historical investigation. The Return began probably in 537. In this first detachment of colonists were representatives of perhaps most of the families that had been carried into exile; but the inclination to return was by no means universal. Many found their social and political circumstances in Babylonia very satisfactory, and were naturally unwilling to leave their property* and try their fortunes in Palestine; and, however great were the hopes that had clustered about the Return, some persons did not care to take part personally in the beginnings of the new community, though they gave contributions to help on the work. But it is a mistake to suppose that those who remained in Babylonia composed the unbelieving and recreant elements of the people; such, to be sure, were among them. That as a class they were not indifferent to the welfare of the colony is shown by the large gifts which a little later were sent up to the temple. The time soon came when religion was at a lower ebb in Judea than in Babylonia; and it was only through the Law enforced by Ezra and Nehemiah, representatives of the more orthodox people in Babylonia, that the colony was at length made a Jewish community.

Sheshbazzar, a Persian officer,† was commissioned to superintend the colonization of the Jews in Palestine, and, it would seem, to act as governor of the

* Cf. Josephus, *Antiquities*, XI., 1, 3.

† So Stade: it is unlikely that one of the Jews would be entrusted with the task of establishing the community, since it demanded a man with greater authority and a greater knowledge of affairs than such a person would possess; the questions arising between the colonists and the residents of Palestine as well as the necessary transactions with the Persian court would also be handled best by an experienced Persico-Babylonian official. Wellhausen, however, *Israelitische u. Jüd. Geschichte*, 1894, p. 120, note 2, thinks it more probable that Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel were identical; Tattenai might very well call by the former name (Ezra 5:16) the person elsewhere called by the latter; moreover the Persian Empire was at first favorably disposed to the colony, then afterwards became distrustful; so that it is more likely that Zerubbabel would have been appointed governor at the start than at a later date.

new community (cf. Ezra 1:8.11). There also stood at the head of the returning party a council of twelve men, who controlled the internal affairs of the colony (Neh. 7:7; cf. Ezra 2:2). Prominent members of this council were Zerubbabel, grandson of the unfortunate Jehoiachin, and Joshua, grandson of the priest Seraiah, whom Nebuchadrezzar had executed at Riblah (Ezra 3:2; 1 Ch. 3:17 sqq.; 5:40 sq.; 2 Kgs. 25:18); both of these men played a conspicuous part in later events, as will presently be seen.

In the arrangements for the Restoration it was provided by a decree of Cyrus that the temple should be built in a prescribed form and size (Ezra 1:2 sq.; 6:3 sqq.), the expense to be met by a special contribution from the royal treasury. The golden and silver vessels that had been brought to Babylon were also returned.

The colonists were in number about 50,000; the numbers of the various classes are set down in the list (Neh. 7:66 sqq.) as 42,360 citizens, 7,387 slaves and 245 singers. The party seems to have arrived in Jerusalem in 537. They settled in and around the city, for the most part within the limits of the districts that had belonged to the kingdom of Judah. Some have supposed that room was made for them by driving out the Edomites who were occupying portions of the territory; this is not clear. It would appear, however, from the great number of mixed marriages that called forth the action of Ezra and Nehemiah later on, that though the new community exhibited a tendency to exclusivism, nevertheless remnants of the old Israelite population were not only living in close proximity to the province, but were even allowed to dwell among the new settlers.

In spite of the representations of the Chronicler, the building of the temple does not seem to have been one of the first works attempted. The assertion that Sheshbazzar laid the foundation (Ezra 6:16) stands in direct opposition to the definite statement of the prophet Haggai (2:18) that the foundation was laid on the 24th day of the ninth month (i. e. at the end) of the year 520, and that up to this time the house of JHVH had lain in ruins. Both Haggai and Zechariah know nothing of a hindrance put in the way of the work by the Samaritans, but make the indifference and self-seeking spirit of the Jews responsible for the delay. Moreover, had Cyrus or Cambyzes, at the instance of the Samaritans, given a decree that the work should cease, this document would certainly have been found, together with the edict authorizing the construction of the temple, when search was made in the archives by Darius (Ezra 5 and 6). That the building was authorized by a royal decree is no argument to prove that the work was commenced in 527 or 526. It is nothing wonderful if, in an empire so large and so loosely connected as was the Persian Empire at that time, all orders from the court are not carried out at once by the local authorities. Then, too, there were many duties that seemed to demand the immediate attention of the colonists;

they were occupied with the work of providing for the shelter and welfare of their families in the new places of abode, and thus found occasion to put off execution of the royal decree until a more convenient time, and regarded the command as a permission of which they might avail themselves when an opportunity offered itself.

According to the words of Haggai (2:14), the only provision made for public worship was the erection of an altar on the site of the temple. With this the most pressing necessity was met, since here the regular and special offerings could be made. Sheshbazzar contented himself with making a contribution to the temple-treasury and furnishing some garments for the priests. Thus the burden of the expense fell on the people. There was another reason why more was not done at the start; the circumstances of the colony appear to have been very unfavorable. In addition to the difficulties attending settlement in the new country, repeated failures of crops disheartened the people.

The period from 586 to 520 was devoted to the work of establishing the community and settling the land; but there exists no information as to the course of events. In this interval Zerubbabel was appointed governor of Judah, and Joshua attained to the dignity of high-priest. The former obtained his position perhaps on account of his energy and ability. But how Joshua came to be made high-priest, or indeed why the office was instituted, cannot be determined. It did not exist before the Exile, though at the temple in Jerusalem there must have been a chief-priest. Deuteronomy knows nothing of it; and even Ezekiel in his plan of the new temple makes no provision for it; he declares that a prince shall take the place formerly held by the king. Perhaps because the governor was a foreigner, or in any case a Persian officer, the desire to have also a purely national head led to the establishment of this new office. Perhaps also Joshua was chosen to give special distinction to the family of Zadok, which alone, according to Ezekiel, should possess the right to the priesthood.

In this period several changes took place in the Persian Empire which had an important bearing on the condition of affairs in the colony in 520. In the year 529 Cyrus fell in battle with the Massagetæ. His son Cambyzes then took up the work he had so successfully carried on, and added Egypt to the already extensive Persian domain. But while he was endeavoring to extend his conquest yet further, he was recalled by the report of a sedition that had broken out at home. Before starting out on his expedition to the southwest, Cambyzes had secretly murdered his brother Bardes (the Smerdis of the Greeks) to make sure his own seat on the throne. During his absence the Magian Gomates impersonated the murdered Bardes, whose death had not as yet become generally known, and seized the throne. As Cambyzes was hastily returning, news of Bardes' success reached him in Syria, whereupon he committed suicide (522). But the reign of the Pseudo-Smerdis was brief; a conspiracy was formed against him by seven promi-

nent Persian noblemen, headed by Darius Hystaspis, a member of the Achæmænian family. Bardes was murdered, and Darius became king (521). But his accession was the signal for revolts that shook the empire to its foundations. Only the western provinces continued to render obedience, perhaps with the hope that without effort on their part the government would be overthrown, when they would obtain their freedom.

In this expectation the colonists took a lively interest. The commotion among the nations seemed to indicate the approach of the Messianic time, when the prophecies would be fulfilled, as they had already been fulfilled in part by the Return from Babylon. These hopes were naturally connected with Zerubbabel, the descendant of David, and the Jews soon began to regard him as the Messianic prince, now uncrowned, but whose glory would soon become manifest. Public interest was thus concentrated in him; and, as he had been appointed governor, he now became the leader of the congregation and his influence excelled that of his associates in the council of twelve.

The prophets Haggai and Zechariah seized this opportunity, when the minds of the people were strongly moved with anticipations of coming happiness and glory, to urge the congregation to undertake the building of the temple and thus to fulfill a necessary condition, without which the better future would never dawn (Ezra 5:1).

On the first of Elul in the second year of Darius (Aug. 520) Haggai addressed Zerubbabel and Joshua together with the assembled people, and explained the reason of the misfortunes and bad harvests which had hitherto repaid the efforts of the farmers. It was a mistake, he said, to wait for a more favorable time to erect the temple. The reverse would be the more reasonable procedure; for, as soon as they concerned themselves less with efforts to provide themselves with luxuries and paneled residences and turned their attention to the erection of JHVH's house, then their situation would change for the better. For the drought and the small harvests were the consequences of their neglect of the temple (Hag. 1:1 sqq.).

The religious zeal excited by this sermon bore fruit in a resolution to commence the work, which was actually begun on the 24th of the same month (Hag. 1:12 sqq.). Some time was occupied in removing the debris and preparing the site. In the meantime the thoughts of the people naturally reverted to the time when the former temple had stood here in all its magnificence; in comparison with this building the proposed structure seemed small and mean, and a spirit of despondency seized the congregation. Therefore on the 21st of the seventh month (beginning of Oct.), at the feast of Booths, Haggai delivered a second address of encouragement and exhortation, promising the assistance of JHVH in such measure that the present circumstances would undergo a complete change; a mighty revolution would occur among the nations, and the most valuable treas-

ures of the world would be brought to Jerusalem; thus, though the beginnings might be comparatively unpromising, in the end the glory of the second temple would exceed that of the first (Hag. 2:1 sqq.).

In the eighth month (Oct.-Nov. 520) the prophet Zechariah came before the people, and reminded them of the lesson taught by history; God had been very angry with their fathers, and hence the fate of those who had provoked his displeasure, and hence also the present condition of the congregation. But JHVH is now ready to favor Israel, if Israel will meet his requirements. Therefore let all take heed lest they make the fatal mistake which condemned the former generations; hearken to the prophets, for, though these speakers were not always highly esteemed, yet God's word, which they spoke, did abide, and the punishments threatened did come. In view of this let the congregation be diligent in the service of God (Zech. 1:1 sqq.).

On the 24th of the ninth month (Dec. 520) the ceremonies attending the laying of the foundation-stone took place. Haggai now reminded the congregation of the urgency of the work. By an illustration (Hag. 2:11 sqq.) he showed that the temporary altar erected in 536 could not sanctify the congregation; the people were not in close touch with religious life; worldly interests prevailed, and, unless the temple was rebuilt, Israel would remain unclean. But, seeing that the work was commenced, he reiterated his comforting assurance, declaring that from this day on a change would take place in Israel's fortunes; though blasting and mildew had ruined the crops in past years, now God's blessing would ensure abundance. He also designated Zerubbabel as the Messianic prince whom JHVH had chosen, and promised the swift overthrow of the heathen.

If, however, strong persuasion was brought to bear upon the congregation from within, there were not wanting enemies without who sought to prevent the work. Tattenai, satrap of the province west of the Euphrates, in company with other Persian officers, came to Jerusalem and inquired by what authority the building was being erected, and who had undertaken the enterprise. He communicated the information given him to Darius, stating that on a visit to Jerusalem he had found work on a temple proceeding very rapidly, and that the builders claimed the permission of Cyrus, whose special officer, Sheshbazzar, had laid the foundation years before,* and since that time the house had been in the

* This assertion seems at variance with the statements of Haggai and Zechariah, according to which Zerubbabel laid the foundation in 520. But it must be remembered that it would have been very unfortunate for the Jews if the impression had been made that they were acting arbitrarily; hence they represented that the work now being carried on so vigorously was the continuation of what had been begun under royal authority, and had now been in progress 16 years. Sheshbazzar may have begun to remove the debris; he may even have laid a foundation, but since he was a heathen, while on the one hand it might be convenient to use the fact in defense against inquisitive officials, yet, on the other, the work was not done at all unless done by a member of Israel. The lapse of 16 years made the undertaking seem something entirely new, and the repetition of the ceremony of laying the foundation-stone might seem eminently proper. There is thus no necessary opposition between Ezra 5:16 and Hag. 2:18.

course of erection, but was not yet finished. He suggested to the king that this claim be examined and that instructions be forwarded.

Darius instituted search among the archives and there was found at Ecbatana a copy of the edict of Cyrus referred to above. Thereupon the king ordered Tattenai not only to put no hindrance in the way of the Jews, but also to assist them with money from the tribute of the province as well as with gifts and materials for sacrifices (cf. Ezra 5 and 6).

That Darius found it politic to favor the Jews is very probable when we consider his circumstances in the opening years of his reign. But that the command given in his letter to Tattenai was not literally carried out seems also quite certain.

If the idea that Israel stood under the wrath of God had oppressed the spirits of the people before the erection of the temple was begun, and if at the start despondency was very prevalent, as the work progressed the state of feeling gradually changed, and presently the most enthusiastic expectations began to be entertained. The illusions growing out of the Messianic hopes, which were now confirmed by the commotions in the Persian Empire, were no doubt in great measure the occasion of the large contributions freely made to the temple-fund, not only by the colonists, but also by the Jews in Babylonia.

These ideas were nourished by the preaching of the prophets. It has already been shown that Haggai viewed the erection of the temple as the fulfillment of a condition that would secure JHVH's blessing and the advent of the Messianic time. But yet more definitely does the same thought appear in Zechariah, that this work, through which a part of the old prophecies has been fulfilled, is to be taken as an evidence that the beginning of the Messianic kingdom is at hand. It is an indication that JHVH will overthrow the heathen whom he used as instruments to punish Judah, but who had overstepped the bounds of requirements and inflicted sorer punishment than was intended (Zech. 1:15). The horns (i. e. the powers) that oppressed Judah and Jerusalem will be cast to the ground (cf. 2:1 sqq.), JHVH's wrath will be visited on the land of the north (i. e. the Babylonian-Persian Empire) until his will is accomplished (cf. 6:8 sqq.). He will make the oppressors of his people become a prey to those who now serve them, i. e. they will be servants of Israel. The execution of this judgment will shortly take place; therefore the prophet urges the Jews who still remain in Babylonia to return at once (cf. 2:10), in order that they may not be involved in the catastrophe that will overwhelm the north. Moreover, though now the population of Jerusalem is small, presently so great will be the number of men and cattle in the place that the limits may not be circumscribed by walls; this lack of protecting fortifications will nevertheless not be felt, for JHVH will be a wall of fire around Jerusalem, and will dwell in the temple (cf. 2:8, 9).

But is there not still resting on the congregation some unexpiated guilt which might prevent the fulfilment of these hopes? If so, responded Zechariah, then JHVH himself will remove the hindering cause. In a vision the prophet saw Joshua standing before God, with Satan as accuser; the high-priest was clothed with filthy garments, symbolizing the impurities resting upon him.* JHVH reproved Satan, but commanded that Joshua should be clothed in spotless garments. The high-priest was then informed that his guilt had been removed from him, and the continuance of his priesthood was promised on condition that he should avoid the sins of the past. He thus becomes a symbol that all guilt has been purged away; and the re-establishment of the priesthood is made a guarantee that the Messiah will come (c. 3). In another vision Zechariah saw a large scroll inscribed with curses, which flew over the land discovering and cutting off sinners, thus betokening that in the future the curse for guilt would of itself light on the guilty (c. 5:1 sqq.). Even the very conception of sin was removed from the land; the prophet saw a leaden ephah-measure into which was cast a woman who symbolized the wickedness of Israel; the whole was swiftly borne by two winged figures to the land of Shinar, where it was to be placed (c. 5:5 sqq.).

From all places whither they had been dispersed the Jews would return to Palestine, which would become a most fruitful land (c. 8:7, 8). Like the Deutero-Isaiah, Zechariah expected that the new temple would attract all the nations of the earth, who would come to the Holy Land and become JHVH's servants (c. 8:20 sqq.).

With such promises the two prophets encouraged the Jews to diligently prosecute the work on the temple; but to the governor Zerubbabel a special reward was offered. He, it was said, would overcome the difficulties of the undertaking, not by might, but through the influence of JHVH's spirit (cf. 4:6, 7). When at length it had come to a successful completion, he would be installed as the Messianic king. So thoroughly convinced of this was Zechariah that in a symbolic way he crowned the prince king of the congregation. He received the command (cf. 6:9 sqq.) to take a part of the gold and silver that had been contributed by the Babylonian Jews and to make two crowns; these should be placed, one on the head of Zerubbabel, the other on the high-priest Joshua,† while the prophet said to them: *Behold the man whose name is the Sprout; and under him will it sprout forth, and he will build the temple of JHVH. Yea, he will build the temple of JHVH, and bear the glory, sitting and ruling on his throne, while Joshua will be priest at his right hand and the counsel of peace will be between them.*

* Joshua seems to have done something which, in the opinion of the people, rendered him unworthy of his high office.

† From the fact that two crowns are mentioned and from the last words of the passage: *between them both* (v. 13)—it appears that in the original text two names, not one, must have stood. That v. 13a must refer to Zerubbabel is clear from c. 4:9. The LXX text in v. 13 seems to have preserved the original reading על יְמִינֵי instead of על כִּסְּאֵהוּ on his throne.

Thus Zechariah thought the dynasty of David would again come into power, and the dominion of the heathen would cease as Haggai had predicted.

But on the completion of the temple these expectations were not realized. Zerubbabel did not become king; and it would appear that no member of the family of David was again appointed governor. If the Persian government became aware of the ideas the Jews held concerning Zerubbabel, it is no wonder that it did not appoint a relative as his successor; experience in other quarters must have been a sufficient warning against entrusting authority to the descendants of national dynasties. Also in the congregation the idea of attempting to restore the throne of David became gradually less prominent, and the tendency to exalt the position of the high-priest became more pronounced, though by slow degrees; for in Nehemiah's time the direction of affairs was still in the hands of the civil authorities.

The temple was finished on the 23d of Adar*, in the sixth year of Darius (Apr. 516), and the occasion was celebrated with services of joy and thanksgiving. It seems clear that the structure was not built according to the prescriptions of Ezekiel, in the effort to separate the clergy from the laity.

The fact that the ideals held before the congregation by the prophets were not realized threatened two dangers: either the efforts of the people to reach these ideals would be relaxed altogether, or else they would be diverted from their high aim to things tainted with worldliness and heathenism.

The circumstances of the community remained much the same after 516 as they had been before. The expected progress had not been attained. Palestine continued to be a land which yielded but a poor return for the labor expended, and drought and locusts played havoc with the crops. Some few persons succeeded in advancing to a state of prosperity; these were, for the most part, descendants of noble families, and from them were chosen the officers of the community. Some priests also, whose support was assured by the service of the temple, became prosperous; and between them and the nobles intimate relations were naturally formed. It was more to the interest of this new aristocracy to maintain its wealth and high position than to give attention to the ideals of the prophets. Similarity in social standing and in interests brought them into close relations with the rich and noble families living in the neighborhood, and ties of connection began to be made by intermarriage as well as by business intercourse.

This course of action, to be sure, met the spiritual needs of these neighbors. They were in great part descendants of the Israelite population of the land, and revered JHVH as their father's God, and had come in some measure under the

* According to the Aramaic document in Ezra 6:15, on the third day. But the statement in 3 Ezra 7:5 seems the correct one, since it would have been easy to leave out the number 20, but its insertion is improbable.

influence of prophetic teaching and the Reform of Josiah. Individuals of their number were permitted to participate in the service of the temple, not perhaps altogether because of the rich gifts they might make, but because in this way the congregation was strengthened. It may have seemed to some pious and well-meaning Jews that by this addition of strangers God would bring about the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the Messianic time, when Ephraim would unite with Judah and the temple be a house of prayer for all nations. Appeal might be made to the Law to justify the act, for Deuteronomy takes a very kindly attitude toward strangers, excluding only Ammonites and Moabites from the congregation (Dt. 23:3 sqq.).

But the plan of Ezekiel, that the new Israel should maintain itself as a sharply distinct community, holy to JHVH and obeying with scrupulous exactness the commands of JHVH, was disordered by the introduction of this idea. These neighbors had not been concerned in the punishment of the Exile; and therefore had not been brought under the influences which had created the Jewish Church; on the contrary, the old Israelite character was still manifest in them, and their reception into the congregation was calculated to work mischief.

The feelings of many Jews had already, doubtless, been embittered by the fact that these neighbors, who had not experienced the woes of the Exile, enjoyed a greater degree of prosperity than the congregation which had received the promise that its good fortune would provoke the envy of the world. And the only comfort left, the fact of being a member of the congregation of JHVH, an heir of the promises, was removed when these men were allowed to participate in the same blessings.

Not only did worldliness begin to creep in from without; a spirit of carelessness and indifference seized many of the Jews themselves. What profit was there in heeding God's commands, if the temporal rewards promised were not obtained? Of other than earthly blessings they had scarcely an idea; their hope of these had been disappointed, and they therefore sought them in another way. So there reappeared the old sinful tendency to fraud and deceit in every-day affairs, to immorality and kindred misdeeds. The mischief became more widespread; for the idea presently developed that JHVH was not a holy God, since he did not punish these sins. Then, too, it seemed useless to pay the heavy taxes to the temple and the priests when there was no indication that JHVH cared for Israel. No zeal, therefore, was displayed in satisfying the claims of JHVH; inferior animals were presented as offerings or none at all. The fear of offending the holiness of God was gone.

Even the priests became infected with the same spirit and performed their duties with laxity and reluctance, while they shut their eyes to the shortcomings of the laity.

Thus came the danger that the same conditions against which the prophets in former years directed their utterances would again present themselves. This danger was aggravated, not only by the admission of non-Jewish neighbors to the temple, but also by the practice of contracting marriages with the daughters of these people. The leading classes, and notably the priests, in the effort to make sure their own influence, had set a bad example which the lower classes quickly followed; and soon there was no family, not even that of the high-priest, that was not implicated.

A reaction, however, presently set in. The more conservative elements drew together and opposed the deplorable movement. These men soon formed the conclusion that the final judgment of JHVH was at hand, when he would destroy all the sinners and usher in the Messianic time. They themselves were confident that their names were written in JHVH'S book of remembrance, so that they would be kept safe when the terrible judgment came. Israel was now so sinful that another punishment similar to the Exile would be required to remove the guilty offenders.

Out of the circle of these men one individual rises to prominence on account of his personal efforts to bring Israel to repentance. His literary work, originally anonymous, may be conveniently referred to under the traditional designation *The Prophecy of Malachi*. This prophet reminds the discontented congregation of the love of God manifested both in the remote past and in the recent restoration of Jerusalem, and seeks to recall the Jews to a sense of their obligation to honor God as a son honors his father (c. 1:2 sqq.). By Israel's defection from the service of God the holiness of JHVH has been desecrated; the present condition of the temple service is altogether intolerable, and it would be better if there were no service at all; for God has no real pleasure in ceremonial observances, which are of value only as they secure spiritual service (c. 1:6 sqq.).

Already in Malachi's time the judgment of the past history of Israel which had prevailed during the Exile had undergone a considerable change. The facts connected with the Return and the Restoration occasioned considerations which showed that the present was yet more miserable than the past; those who lived in pre-exilic times had enjoyed things now looked for in vain. Thus gradually developed the idea of the "good old time," until finally a representation of the past was formed according to which the former time possessed all the ideals of the present and was free from all its disadvantages. Malachi could even use the example of the ancestors in order to shame the unworthy descendants (c. 2:5 sqq.).

With special emphasis does Malachi treat the ideal of Israel's holiness. Against this a grave offense has been committed in the matter of marriage with persons outside of the community (c. 2:10 sqq.). JHVH'S sanctuary has been profaned thereby because the strange wife has part in the service of her husband. The iniquity of divorce is also dwelt upon; it involves, says Malachi, the

violation of a covenant made in JHVH'S presence (c. 2:13 sq.); the cry of the divorced wife makes Israel's service displeasing in God's sight.

Two possibilities now lie before Israel. If the present course of sin be persisted in, then a stern judgment will inevitably ensue. JHVH sends his messenger before him to prepare the way. Unexpectedly he will come to his temple; and who will be able to stand the scrutiny of his searching examination? The priests will be called to account, and a swift judgment will be meted out to those who have offended against God's laws. But if Israel will repent and perform the deeds of the Law, God stands ready to turn in mercy and bestow untold blessings (c. 8:10 sqq.).

In other words, there is no way out of the woes of the present situation other than that marked out by Ezekiel: by a strict observance of God's requirements Israel must prove itself the holy people of JHVH, and sharply distinguish itself from other peoples in the land; the colony is too weak to absorb these and would run a serious risk of being assimilated by them; to meet this danger internal strength must first be developed. The congregation must become aware of the obligations which the holiness of God lays upon it, and resolve to perform its religious duties; the opposition between Israel and the heathen must be emphasized, and in nothing was this opposition so clearly expressed as in the daily religious services. There was needed, then, something that would hold the people to the unfaltering observance of these rites. To accomplish this end there could be found no more efficient means than a law, complete and conclusive, that answered all questions concerning these rites, and that would govern the congregation in all its relations. The publication of such a law is the next important event to be chronicled.

The efforts of Malachi and his companions were perhaps temporarily successful. In the beginning of Xerxes' reign (485-465) disagreements seem to have arisen between the colonists and their neighbors (Ezra 4:6). The events of the time might have appeared to justify those who urged that Israel should prepare for the day of the Lord by giving strict heed to his ordinances. Premonitions of the downfall of the Persian Empire were to be seen: the Greeks had checked the movement of the Empire toward the west at Marathon; Egypt had revolted and had to be subdued. But nothing definite can be said as to the progress of events in the colony at this time. If any quarrels arose between the Jews and their neighbors they were in all probability ended by victory for the non-Jews, who in wealth and culture had an advantage over the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

The state of affairs in Babylonia during this time was totally different. The Jews there had kept up a lively correspondence with their friends and relatives in Palestine, and were well informed of the progress of events there. When news of the loose religious life of the colonists reached them, they took the side of Malachi's party; for zeal in obeying JHVH's ordinances and in seeking his honor

was more pronounced among them than in Palestine; and the temptations to which the colonists were subjected did not assail the Jews in Babylonia, who were in the enjoyment of more favorable circumstances. The ideal of Ezekiel, to form a community practicing the rites in purity and holiness, was still clearly before their eyes. Nor had they been discouraged by the failure of the first attempt, but were disposed to renew the effort.

The influence of Ezekiel's teachings had inspired a lively activity in the study of the traditional law. The leisure enjoyed by the priests in Babylonia favored this. The danger that a knowledge of the usages and practices in the pre-exilic temple worship would be lost now that such worship was impossible, was obviated by the codification and extension of the laws and ordinances formerly in force on the basis of the legislation of Ezekiel. It seemed to some that this new code would prove effective in introducing needed reforms in the colony and in preventing defection in the future.

A fitting opportunity for an attempt to reorganize the Jewish Church on the lines marked out in this code soon presented itself. Ezra, a priest and a zealous student of the law, was ready to undertake the work, and petitioned the Persian government to grant him the necessary authority. Artaxerxes Longimanus (465-424) and his council readily fell in with the plan, which, it seemed, might render the authority of Persia in Palestine more secure. There was reason why causes of disquiet in that quarter should be removed and the interests of the leaders of the community united with those of the Empire; for an epidemic of revolt had again broken out, and it was wise policy to use all possible means to prevent its spread.

By the decree of Artaxerxes permission was given that all Jews who felt so disposed might accompany Ezra, who was commissioned to investigate affairs in Palestine, and to arrange all things in accord with the law in his possession. He was entrusted with gifts made by the king and his advisers for the temple, and authorized to collect money among the Jews in Babylonia in order to obtain means to make the offerings prescribed in the law. He was also empowered to draw on the treasurer of the province west of the Euphrates for money to defray the necessary expenses of the temple-service. In the future no tax should be imposed on those who served in the temple in any capacity. Ezra was also given full power to appoint judges over the Jews and to enforce the requirements of the law, punishing those who disobeyed with fines, imprisonment or death (cf. Ezra 7).

Ezra's commission conferred on him very great authority. But the question remained whether, in case the Jews did not submit willingly to his legislation, the Persian officers in the province would afford him assistance; and this was improbable. The most influential persons in the community favored the claims of the non-Jews because related to them by marriage. These strangers who were thus connected with the Jewish nobles were on good terms with the Persian officers;

in fact some of them were Persian officers. So that Ezra had to rely mainly on the strength of his cause and the support of those who espoused his views.

On the first of Nisan, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes (458), those who had resolved to accompany Ezra assembled at "the stream that runs to Ahava"* (Ezra 8:15). The company was composed of two families of priests, one Davidic family and relatives of twelve families of the laity; in all 1368 men. No Levites were present; so Ezra sent a deputation to request Iddo, a chief in a place called Casiphia, that the matter might be remedied. In this way three families of Levites, in all 38 men, were persuaded to join the party. Two hundred and twenty descendants of the temple-slaves also accompanied them (Ezra 8:15 sqq.).

Before starting out on the long journey Ezra held a service of fasting and prayer, in which God was entreated to give help and protection. For Ezra had made representations to the king concerning JHVH's power to preserve those who serve him, and he was therefore ashamed to ask for an armed escort. The presence of soldiers with the company was the more needful because the gold and silver that was being taken up to Jerusalem might excite the cupidity of robbers. These valuable articles were given into the care of twelve priests and twelve Levites, who were made responsible for them. On the twelfth of Nisan (Apr. 458) the march was begun, and on the first of the fifth month (Ab, i. e. Aug.) Jerusalem was reached (Ezra 7:9; 8:31). On the fourth day after the arrival, the silver and gold was weighed in the temple and found intact. Sacrifices were offered in token of gratitude for the success of the undertaking. The orders of the king were communicated to the Persian officials.

Ezra at once began his chosen work; and the practice of intermarriage with the non-Jewish people of the land first claimed his attention (Ezra 9). He seems to have had no idea of the extent to which this had been carried, so that when, shortly after his arrival, several prominent men came to him while he was in the temple, and informed him that such alliances were very common and that nobles and priests were especially implicated, he was greatly grieved and astonished, and sat in a posture of sadness until the hour of the evening sacrifice, while the pious members of the congregation gathered around him. Meanwhile he had been resolving upon a plan of action, which he now put into operation. At the evening sacrifice he arose and, falling on his knees, in the words of a prayer represented to the people their sinful condition: with shame he confessed that Israel's sins had been increasing from the times of the fathers to this day; the nation was destroyed on account of iniquity, and the consequences of guilt still rested on the people, for they were under heathen rule; but God had recently shown mercy in moving the Kings of Persia to permit the Restoration; yet Israel, heedless of punishments and ungrateful for mercies, had disregarded God's express prohibi-

* Probably some canal emptying into the Euphrates.

tion of intermarriage with the heathen; JHVH is righteous, his promises have been fulfilled; but Israel is guilty and worthy of condemnation (Ezra 9:6 sqq.).

This prayer had a powerful effect. The assembly in the temple had increased in numbers while Ezra was on his knees. When he had ceased speaking, Shechaniah, of the family of Elam, confessed in behalf of the multitude that Israel had sinned; but nevertheless there was still hope, if only the people would enter into a covenant with God to dismiss the foreign wives with their children; he urged Ezra to take charge of the matter and promised coöperation. Ezra at once arose and, taking advantage of the favorable disposition of the people, made all present swear to do the thing proposed (Ezra 10:1 sqq.).

But it would appear that a storm of opposition very quickly arose against the plan, which, if carried out would inevitably engender hatred, disunion and misfortune. For not until about four months later, on the 17th of the ninth month (cf. Ezra 10:9) was the call for an assembly at Jerusalem issued with the threat that he who failed to appear would be excommunicated and suffer the loss of his property. Accordingly on the 20th all the people assembled in the open space near the temple, in fear because of the occasion and suffering on account of the inclement weather (for it was December, a rainy month). Ezra addressed them, urging them to dismiss their foreign wives. They signified their willingness to do this, but said they could not act immediately, since the work required time and it was the rainy season, so that open-air meetings could not be held. Therefore, they suggested, let the chiefs of the people be commissioned to adjust the matter; let them summon the offenders at appointed times and, with the aid of the representative men and officers of the cities, settle the affair, in order that JHVH's wrath may be averted (Ezra 10:9 sqq.).

This proposition was almost unanimously adopted. Ezra was put at the head of the committee, which convened a few days later on the first day of the tenth month (Jan. 457). In three months the work was completed. According to the list in Ezra 10:18 sqq., almost all the families which had come up to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel were guilty; and even in the family of the high-priest were found three offenders who now pledged themselves to dismiss their non-Jewish wives.

The account breaks off here, and there is no information given as to whether the persons whose names are mentioned in the list kept their word, or as to the consequences which then ensued. The Book of Nehemiah, which is the continuation of the Book of Ezra, opens with a description of the colony in December 445. But not a word is said concerning the events that occurred in the intervening period of 12 years. It would seem that these years were among the most wretched in the history of the colony, and apparently an attempt has been made to expunge from the records all reference to the painful theme.

But even in the absence of direct information, a fairly satisfactory picture of the events preceding Nehemiah's arrival may readily be constructed. The Book of Nehemiah clearly shows that disunion and strife prevailed in the colony; that the vindictive feeling excited in the non-Jewish families by Ezra's work of reform found expression in attacks on Jerusalem, in which the community was obliged to submit, and in consequence Ezra's plan was given up. Ezra no doubt tried to overcome the opposition to his work partly by the authority of the law, partly by the power granted him by the king. But his opponents, both within and without the city, increased in number and became more energetic. The Persian officials in the province gave him no assistance. And, as he lacked the executive ability and statesmanlike qualities of the leader who was presently to appear, he was unable to cope with the circumstances, and his efforts met with failure; the results already obtained were swept away, and it became questionable whether he would ever be able to carry out his plan.

This disastrous failure of the attempt to enforce the Jewish principle of exclusivism exposed the Jews to bitter mockery and insult, and, what was of more consequence, augmented the danger that the congregation would be absorbed by the surrounding heathen.

But at this crisis unexpected assistance came from Persia. Nehemiah, a cup-bearer of Artaxerxes, made use of the favor he had obtained with the king in order to gain permission to help his unfortunate brethren. This man, in whom lively zeal for the Jewish religion and the abilities of a statesman were united, succeeded in getting control of the colony and in bringing it out of its mournful situation to strength and prosperity as well as accomplishing the reforms attempted by Ezra.

In the month Kislev of the 20th year of Artaxerxes (445), while at the palace in Shushan, Nehemiah received a visit from his cousin (or brother) Chanani and several other Jews who had come from Palestine. He asked them about the condition of affairs in Jerusalem and was greatly grieved to learn that the community was in helpless misery, exposed to scorn and ridicule, for the walls of the city were broken down and the gates burnt. For some time Nehemiah was plunged in dejection, and kept praying for the forgiveness of Israel's sins and beseeching for divine mercy on those who revered JHVH, while he entreated especially that he might obtain favor with the king (Neh. 1:1 sqq.).

But three months passed by ere he could enter upon any plan. In the month Nisan he was on duty in the king's apartments. Though he strove to conceal his troubled thoughts, his countenance betrayed him, and Artaxerxes inquired the cause of his dejection. Nehemiah replied that the desolation of the city of his ancestors grieved him greatly. The king, thinking that perhaps Nehemiah wished a contribution of money to be made for the city's benefit, asked him what he desired to do. After a brief, silent prayer to JHVH, Nehemiah requested

that the king should appoint him to go to Jerusalem and repair the city. His petition was at once granted, and he was commissioned governor of Jerusalem. In response to a question of the king, the queen also being present, Nehemiah stated the length of time for which he desired leave of absence. Letters were given him for the satrap of the province west of the Euphrates as well as for the keeper of the royal forests, ordering that timber be provided for use in the proposed work. An escort of officers and cavalry accompanied the new governor on his way to Jerusalem. The letters to the Persian officers were delivered en route. The precise date of the arrival in Jerusalem is unknown (Neh. 2:1 sqq.).

Though Nehemiah was careful not to disclose his purposes, the enemies of the community quickly learned of them in some way, perhaps through correspondence with the Persian officers in the province. Sanballat of Bet-Horon, and Tobiah, an Ammonite officer of the Persian king, were much grieved that a man had come to seek the welfare of the Jews (Neh. 2:10).

For three days Nehemiah remained quietly in Jerusalem. Then in the night of the fourth, accompanied by a small escort on foot, he made a secret inspection of the ruined walls. Becoming convinced of the feasibility of his plan, he communicated it to the nobles and chief men of the community. He urged them to put an end to the disgrace and misfortune of the city by restoring the walls, and to encourage them he told of his conversation with the king and of the edict that had been issued. They recognized in this a manifestation of God's favor, and declared their willingness to undertake the work. When news of this resolve reached the ears of Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem, they sought by scorn and ridicule, coupled with the charge of sedition, to put a damper on the scheme: "What is this thing you propose to do? Will you rebel against the king?" (Neh. 2:19). But Nehemiah peremptorily dismissed them with an emphatic reference to the real point at issue between them and the community: "The God of heaven will make us prosper; and we his servants will arise and build. But you have no portion or lawful right or remembrance in Jerusalem."

The work was divided into parts of unequal size; for in the assignment of sections the condition of the walls at the various parts as well as the ability and zeal of the workmen were apparently considered. Individual families (Neh. 3:1), companies of men from the villages in Judah (3:2, 5, 13, 27), and guilds of artisans, took part. Many private citizens willingly repaired parts of the wall at their own expense. Individual men worked on those sections which lay near their dwellings; so especially the priests who lived on the east side of the temple (3:23, 28).

Nevertheless there was not complete unanimity in the effort; some persons, in particular the nobles of Tekoa, refused to bear their share of the burden (3:5). It was a task that taxed the strength of the community to the utmost,

and the Jews certainly underestimated the difficulties when they allowed themselves to be induced to begin it. Then to the natural difficulties which soon appeared, to the demoralizing effect of the example of leading men in the colony, there were added the hostile efforts of enemies without. Sanballat and Tobiah continued their disparaging remarks in the hope of discouraging the workmen (c. 3:33 sqq.).

However, the work was rapidly pushed forward; for the people were zealous; and the wall was already half finished when Sanballat, Tobiah and their confederates, alarmed at the prospect, conspired to effect by violence what words had failed to accomplish. They determined to intimidate the workmen by making a sudden attack on the place. This act of violence was possible, since at that time the Persian government could exercise but little control over affairs in Palestine; the colony was thrown on its own resources for defense, and a regular watch was kept day and night to prevent a surprise (Neh. 4:1 sqq.). But the strain of energetic toil on the walls and of constant, anxious watching for the foe soon began to affect the spirits of the people. Complaint was made to Nehemiah that the workmen were exhausted, and that the quantity of debris was very great; moreover, rumors of sudden assaults were flying thick and fast, and those Jews who came from places where they had an opportunity to observe the movements of the conspirators, repeatedly declared that an attack was imminent (c. 4:4 sqq.).

Nehemiah made preparations for the expected assault. He arranged the people by tribes in suitable places behind the walls, exhorting them all to have no fear, but to remember God's power and to fight with courage for their wives, children and property. But the attack did not take place. The enemy, learning that Nehemiah was ready to receive them, concluded to abandon their scheme; so that the Jews could again devote their whole energy to the work (c. 4:9). But Nehemiah wisely ordered that half of his servants should assist the workmen, while the rest remained under arms in readiness should occasion demand; the rulers of the people were with the different groups of laborers, ready to lead them in case of an attack. The men who brought the building-material as well as those who removed the debris each carried a spear, while the builders had each a sword girded by his side. The hornblower* stood by Nehemiah, who ordered that at the signal all should drop their work and hasten to the place whence the blast came. From the gray of dawn till the stars glimmered in the

* The *Shofar* (שׁוֹפָר) rendered in the A. V. by *cornet* was made of a ram's horn; it was an instrument no doubt used in prehistoric times, and is the solitary ancient musical instrument actually preserved in the Mosaic ritual. It was used in the religious services of Israel (Joel 2:15; Num. 29:1; Lev. 23:24; 25:9), also as a war horn (Judg. 7:8 sqq.; Jer. 4:5; Am. 2:2); according to the Talmud, *Mishnah Taanith* 1:6, it was blown in times of famine, plague of locusts and drought. Its use still survives in the modern Jewish synagogue. Cf. *The Shofar, Its Use and Origin*, by Dr. Cyrus Adler, Assistant Curator of the Collections of Oriental Antiquities and Religious Ceremonial in the U. S. National Museum; *vid. Report of U. S. Nat. Mus.* 1892, pp. 437-450.

evening sky the work was kept up. Nehemiah and his servants did not remove their garments even at night, and kept their weapons constantly within reach (c. 4:10sq.).

A new internal difficulty now threatened to delay the completion of the undertaking. This zealous, unremitting application to labor on the walls amid such great hindrances had brought the poorer members of the colony into debt, for since the work began they had earned no wages, and now want was distressing them; a great cry was also raised against the richer Jews who had made loans to their less fortunate brethren, but had been very careful to secure themselves by demanding adequate security. The debtors had been compelled to mortgage their lands, vineyards and houses, to pledge even their children, in order to procure the necessities of life. The property of some had already passed into the hands of their creditors and they were unable to redeem it. In order to pay the tribute exacted by the king they had been obliged to borrow, and now had before them the mournful prospect of seeing their children become the servants of their creditors. Nehemiah was very indignant when he learned of the matter, and sternly rebuked the nobles and chiefs for exacting usury from their brethren. In a special meeting he called their attention to the fact that he and other Jews living in Babylonia had redeemed Jews who had become slaves of the heathen, while now here in Jerusalem they, leading men in the community, were selling their brothers. This was clearly wrong; if for no other reason, at least in order to put an end to the reproaches of the heathen, they should walk in the fear of God. He pointed to his own good example, and besought them to cease practicing usury and to restore the property taken, together with a hundredth part of the money, corn, wine and oil. To this they agreed and took the solemn oath he required. This oath was observed (Neh. 5:1sq.).

In conjunction with the account of this affair, Nehemiah shows how he strove to lighten the burdens of the people. Though governor, during all the twelve years of his term of office, he did not tax the citizens for his support, as the former governors had done, but on the contrary furnished food for 150 Jews and chiefs who came to Jerusalem from among the heathen. Nor did he permit his servants to oppress the people, but made them work in the interests of the city. While his predecessors in office had pillaged the citizens, he used his money for the public good (Neh. 5:14sq.).

These wise acts of the governor could not fail to produce the best results. The wall was presently finished, though as yet the gates were not hung. At this juncture Sanballat and his allies attempted to accomplish their designs by cunning artifices. They invited Nehemiah to meet them in Kephirim, a village in the plain of Ono, in order to talk over matters. But the prudent governor was not to be taken by guile, and with keen irony sent back word that he was engaged in an important work that should not be interrupted. Four times their

messages received the same treatment. Then Sanballat's servant came with an open letter, informing Nehemiah that it was commonly reported that he was building the walls with the idea of rebellion, and of becoming king of Jerusalem; also that he had hired prophets to preach of him in Jerusalem, saying: *There is a king in Judah*; since this would certainly reach the king's ears, it might be well for Nehemiah to consult with Sanballat and his companions in order that the rumor might be quieted. Nehemiah replied that the rumors were lies pure and simple (Neh. 6:1 sqq.).

It seems not unlikely that these rumors did reach the Persian court. Indeed it appears that to this period the account given in Ezra 4:7 sqq. of the correspondence between the officials in Samaria and Artaxerxes should be referred, though the Chronist has erroneously interpreted it as describing circumstances which hindered the building of the temple (cf. Ezra 4:24).^{*} The account relates that Rehum and Shimshai, in the name of the peoples whom Osnapper (Assurbanipal) had settled in Samaria, wrote a letter to Artaxerxes informing him that the Jews who had come up from him to Jerusalem were building up this city and erecting the walls; now, since the city had in time past been rebellious, it would be well to stop this work, or else the Jews might refuse to pay tribute to Persia; if the king would examine the records, he would find abundant proof of the seditious character of Jerusalem, and if he did not prevent the work now going on, his power west of the Euphrates would soon be *nil*. Artaxerxes returned answer that he had investigated the matter, and was satisfied that Jerusalem had been a seat of rebellion, and therefore, lest an outbreak should again occur, he now commissioned the Samaritan officers to stop this work, and to see that the king's interests suffered no damage. Upon the receipt of this authority the royal officers at Samaria went to Jerusalem, and by the use of armed force stopped the work.

It might be urged against this reference of the above account that the names of the enemies mentioned are not the same as those given in the Book of Nehemiah. But Nehemiah's opponents, Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem, were to all appearances persons who had no influence at the Persian court, and who were therefore obliged to make use of the officials at Samaria to gain their ends; and for this purpose when, in seeking to maintain their influence in Jerusalem, they tried to hinder Nehemiah from building the walls, they denounced the city as about to rebel. The Persian officers, also, did not want the place to become the nucleus of a new Jewish state.

Also if the letter represents the city as being rebuilt, though now it had stood for nearly 100 years, it must be remembered the arrival of more colonists

^{*} On the transposition of this passage cf. E. Schrader, *Die Dauer des zweiten Tempelbaues*, in *Studien und Kritiken*, Gotha, 1867, pp. 467 sqq.: S. R. Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Test.*, pp. 514 sq.

occasioned the addition of new quarters; moreover, in antiquity a city first became such, in the full sense of the word, when the walls were built.

It is a more weighty argument that but slight allusion is made in the correspondence to the fact that the Jews were acting in agreement with an edict given by the king. This decree, like all other decrees of the Persians, was irrevocable, and could only be made of no effect by issuing another edict. To obtain this the Samaritans pointed out that the undertaking authorized would lead to mischievous consequences; and though Artaxerxes in his new decree flatly opposed the plan concerted with Nehemiah, yet as in the one case political considerations contributed to make the plan seem desirable, so now in view of the facts it appeared to be his duty to heed the suggestion of the Samaritans.

All probabilities seem to commend the reference given above. So far as can be learned, up to this time Jerusalem had remained as in 516, a city without walls. The hostility of the neighboring peoples, which had been aroused by more than one evidence of the Jewish spirit of exclusivism, was embittered by Ezra's effort to enforce the marriage-law; and it had become clear that it was practically impossible to organize the community in conformity to the Law until interference from without was excluded by the erection of the walls. Ezra, a religious enthusiast, may not have had the political wisdom to conceive, much less the executive ability to carry out, such a plan; but the practical as well as zealous Nehemiah probably perceived that Jerusalem must first be made a city, then it might become a Jewish city.

Though the sequel to Ezra 4:23 has not been preserved, yet it may reasonably be assumed that the interruption to the work was of short duration. Nehemiah's diplomatic and military skill prevented the enemy from making an attack upon the city, while his influence with the Persian king, to whom he, as governor, sent his own account of what was being done, soon procured him permission to proceed with his work.

But the craft of the governor's foes was not yet exhausted. Their hired agents among the Jews soon began to annoy him. Shemaiah, a prophet in whom perhaps Nehemiah had reposed confidence, was bribed to frighten him, and thus to induce him to violate the temple; he urged Nehemiah, who was visiting him, to shut himself up in the house of JHVH, for enemies were coming that night to kill him. But this cunning scheme, as well as the attempts of other prophets, likewise failed (Neh. 6:10 sq.).

During all this time there was considerable excitement in Jerusalem. The ill-feeling aroused among the wealthier classes by the regulation concerning usury still persisted, and not a few wished that things were now as they were before Nehemiah came. Some nobles, on account of marriage-relationships and community of interests, were acting in collusion with Tobiah, whom they praised before Nehemiah and whom they kept informed of the governor's actions. A

considerable correspondence passed between these disaffected noblemen and Tobiah, who also sent letters to Nehemiah, seeking to frighten him (Neh. 6:17 sqq.).

From all this it may readily be seen that Nehemiah was the life and spirit of the whole undertaking, and that many prominent men took part in it only because they were morally obliged to do so, or because they feared the determined governor. His energy and wisdom overcame all difficulties, so that success was at length attained. In 52 days of toil and watching the work was completed, on the 25th of Elul, i. e. Sept. 444 (Neh. 6:15).

Now that the fortifications of the city were finished, the governor turned his attention to a prudent arrangement of the internal affairs. First, he provided for the systematic watching of the gates in order that the people might carry on their domestic and civil occupations without fear of an attack. For this police-service he selected fit persons from among the lower classes of temple-servants, as well as Levites and singers who were probably favorably disposed toward him, since from his plans of reform a betterment of their condition might be expected. Over them he placed his relatives Chanani and Chananiah, and gave them strict orders concerning the opening and shutting of the gates (Neh. 7:1 sqq.).

Now though the space enclosed by the walls was large, and places of residence were not wanting, yet the inhabitants were comparatively few, and the families were not large (Neh. 7:4).^{*} Nehemiah therefore sought to increase the population. What means was adopted is not known. A census was taken; and perhaps the list which was found, giving the names of those who came to Jerusalem in 588, gave occasion to recall families actually belonging to the city who had located elsewhere.

Shortly after the completion of the walls (probably on a day between the 25th of Elul and the 1st of Tishri 444), a feast of dedication was held. The festival began with sacrifices of atonement, and the purification of the people, the gates and walls by sprinkling blood upon them. Two processions, headed by Levites and singers, marched on the walls and through the city, and finally met in the temple, where amid the blare of horns and songs of praise, the people gave expression to their joy (Neh. 12:27 sqq.).

The independence of the city and community had now been secured; so that the time was ripe for the accomplishment of the plan of Ezra, which had been deferred for 18 years. The self-reliance of the people had been strengthened by the success of Nehemiah's great undertaking, and they were now ready for new enterprises. Ezra might therefore come before the public with the book of the Law and renew the attempt to procure its acceptance. Nehemiah's influence on the masses would also be a potent factor in winning success, and Ezra wisely

^{*} Cf. Professor Paul Haupt's Article on this passage in the *Johns Hopkins University Circulars*, July, 1894, pp. 108 sq.

availed himself of it. Unfortunately no information has been handed down relative to Ezra's negotiations with Nehemiah and the leaders of the community, though such must have preceded the proclamation of the Law. It is clear from Neh. 8:1 sqq. that a favorable feeling toward the project had been aroused in the community.

On the first of Tishri (Sept.) 444 a general assembly of the people was held in the open space in front of the water-gate, and Ezra was asked to produce the Book of the Law of Moses which JHVV had commanded Israel. Ezra mounted a high stand erected for him and read from the book until midday, pausing frequently that the Levites might explain to the people the import of the sections read. The people were greatly pained as they recognized the wide variation of their conduct from the requirements of the Law, and wept aloud. But Nehemiah addressed them with comforting words, bidding them observe this day as a time of rejoicing, holy to JHVV. The Levites echoed his speech; and the afternoon and evening were spent in feasting and mirth (Neh. 8:1 sqq.).

But on the second day of the month the heads of the families with the priests and Levites came to Ezra in order to continue the reading of the Law. The prescriptions concerning the feast of Booths claimed first notice, since this feast fell in Tishri. Proclamation was therefore made that the people should go to the mountains and bring thence the necessary materials to construct the booths; and soon on the house-tops and in court-yards as well as in open spaces near the gates these rustic structures were reared, and from the 15th to the 22d of the month the festival was kept with rejoicing; *for since the days of Joshua ben Nun, the Israelites had not done so.* During the feast the reading of the Law was kept up (Neh. 8:13 sqq.).

On the 23d the feast was concluded by a general assembly. But on the next day the congregation again came together, this time wearing emblems of grief and with earth on their heads. The spirit of exclusivism now came out strongly; all strangers were excluded regardless of any considerations. The assembly alternately confessed the sins of the past and listened to the reading of the Law. Finally Ezra* arose and, in the name of Israel, made an acknowledgment of sins, not only the sins of the present generation, but those of the whole people from the time of its choice by JHVV to the present hour. God, he said, had called Abraham, and made with him a covenant to give to his posterity the land of Canaan; this promise had been kept, and the ancestors of Israel were led out of Egypt into the Holy Land, after receiving at Sinai the laws of God; yet, only by JHVV'S great mercy was Israel saved in the march through the desert, only through him was the land subdued and Israel made prosperous and happy; in spite of all this they regarded not God's laws; but killed the prophets who

* According to the LXX. text of Neh. 9:6.

called them to repentance, and so provoked the long-suffering JHVH that, after repeated efforts to win them back, he at last gave them into the hands of the heathen; nevertheless in great mercy he had not wholly annihilated them; may he now regard the well-merited punishments which, since the days of the Assyrian kings, have befallen Israel, as sufficient; truly, these punishments still persist, for to-day the inheritance of the fathers is under the dominion of heathen rulers (Neh. 9:1 sqq.).

At the conclusion of this prayer, the whole congregation entered into a solemn covenant to observe faithfully all the commandments given by God to the people through Moses. This agreement was put in writing, and sealed and signed by Nehemiah and the heads of the families.

By the terms of the compact intermarriage with those who did not belong to the congregation, as well as the transaction of business on the sabbaths and feast-days, was expressly prohibited, and it was provided that a tax of one-third of a shekel per capita should be levied for the support of the temple services. It was also arranged that the necessary wood for use on the altar should be brought to the temple at appointed times by the several families, whose turns were determined by lot. The people also promised to bring the first-fruits, the first-born of their sons and their cattle, to the priests, and to pay the tithes to the Levites regularly (Neh. 10:28 sqq.).

The important bearing of this covenant on the further development of Judaism is something unique. For through it the efforts to form a congregation of JHVH out of the remnants of the people of Judah were finally successful; and the movement instituted in 621, when, on the basis of Deuteronomy, the attempt was made to transform the nation into the kingdom of God foretold by the prophets, reached a conclusion. Ezra's victory signified a break with the past; the community had stamped his plan with the seal of approval, and all ideas that opposed it were accordingly condemned. But that the victory was something more than temporary was due, not only to Ezra's earnest teaching, but also to the favoring circumstance that for ten years Nehemiah's strong hands controlled affairs in Jerusalem. This man exhibited the same zeal in preventing heretical practices and punishing offenders against the religious law that he had shown in prosecuting the work on the walls. So the power delegated by a heathen government played a conspicuous part in establishing the Jewish Church. And it would appear that force was perhaps necessary to compel adherence to the Law.

In spite of the sworn promises all was still uncertain. The leading classes in Jerusalem had yielded to the reform against their will, and the great mass of the people still moved in the ruts of old habits. Open rebellion against the prohibitions of intermarriage and the admission of strangers soon occurred; the sabbath was desecrated and the requirements of religious life were neglected.

In the 32nd year of Artaxerxes (483) Nehemiah returned to Shushan, perhaps because his leave of absence had terminated. But after some time,* he obtained permission to make a second visit. Whether in the interval another governor had been in charge is uncertain. On his return Nehemiah discovered that, contrary to his regulations, the high-priest Eliashib had given Tobiah, Nehemiah's old enemy, a room in the temple. Nehemiah took immediate action; Tobiah's property was thrown out, the apartment cleansed and restored to its legitimate use.

At the same time he was informed that the Levites had not received their dues; and in consequence they, as well as the singers, had been obliged to leave their places in the temple and to earn a living by tilling their farms. Nehemiah sharply rebuked the authorities who had carelessly allowed this to happen, and summoned the Levites to their duties; at his command payment of the tithes were resumed, and treasurers were appointed to receive and distribute them (Neh. 18:10 sq.).

Greater trouble was experienced with the sabbath-breakers; for against the strict law of rest on the seventh day both custom and the interests of trade were arrayed. Nehemiah observed that the Jews living in the country carried on their work and brought their produce to Jerusalem on the sabbath; and on the next market-day he warned them to desist from the practice. The Tyrian merchants, who sold salted fish and all sorts of goods in Jerusalem on the sabbath to the citizens and Jews from the country, likewise found him a determined man. He sternly reproved the Jews for their share in the matter, reminding them that from such sins Israel was still suffering misfortune. Then he had the gates closed on the sabbath, and gave orders that no persons who carried goods should be admitted. The merchants spent the night in front of the gate once or twice; but this act he strictly prohibited and they soon ceased to give him annoyance (Neh. 18:15 sq.).

He also found the practice of intermarriage with the heathen producing disastrous results. Jews had married women of Ashdod, Ammon and Moab, and their children in many cases could not understand the language of the community. These men may have been of the lower classes, and lived perhaps on the borders of the colony. Nehemiah did not require them to dismiss their wives, but rebuked them, cursed them, plucked their beards, and made them swear that they would not give their sons or daughters into such alliances. In a similar energetic way he dealt with a member of the high-priest's family, the grandson of Eliashib, who was a son-in-law of Sanballat of Bethhoron. Summary punishment was necessary in this case because of the prominence of the offender,

* The expression in Neh. 13:6, לִקְיָם *at the end of days*—is of uncertain meaning.

whose bad example might be infectious. Therefore, Nehemiah expelled him from the community* (Neh. 13:28 sqq.).

With these notices of Nehemiah's zealous and successful efforts to create respect for the Law, the account of his activities ceases; and with this also the period designed to be sketched here concludes.

PART III.

TRANSLATION, COMMENTARY AND GRAMMATICAL NOTES.

The Order of the Psalms in this Commentary.

In the Hebrew Psalter the *Songs of the Return* are not arranged in chronological order. The following is an attempt to dispose them in historical sequence according to their references to the events of the period: 124, 126, 133, 132, 121, 130, 123, 122, 127, 128, 120, 131, 129, 125, 134.

TRANSLATION OF THE SONGS OF THE RETURN.

Psalm 124.—The Release from Exile.

- 1 If we had not had JHVH—
Israel should say;—
- 2 If we had not had JHVH
• When men rose up against us,
- 3 Then they would have swallowed us up alive
When their anger was hot against us;
- 4 Then the waters would have overwhelmed us,
A torrent would have passed over our life;
- 5 Then would have passed over our life
The seething waters.

* This son of Eliashib seems to have been identical with the renegade priest Manasseh, who, according to Josephus (*Ant.* XI, 7-8), instituted on Mt. Gerizim a temple worship in rivalry to that on Mt. Moriah; he followed the model of the Jewish hierarchy and used the Jewish Book of the Law, into which a change was purposely introduced to harmonize it with the pretensions of the Samaritan community (i. e. Mt. Gerizim was substituted for Ebal in Dt. 27:4). In any case it seems clear that the Samaritans obtained their Law and their form of government, the Pentateuch and the priesthood, from Jerusalem. It is not surprising that the soil of Jerusalem burned under the feet of many prominent priests when the city was under the control of Nehemiah and the exclusivists (cf. Wellhausen, *Israelit. u. Jüdische Geschichte*, p. 148 note 3). Jewish exclusivism had kept the Samaritans from obtaining the desired entrance into the Jewish community; so now in turn the Samaritans manifested the same spirit, and from this time on each people bitterly hated the other.

The silence of Nehemiah as to the important consequences that followed the expulsion of Manasseh may be due to the fact that the Samaritan community had not been organized when he wrote or indeed that it was not organized until after his death. In placing the expulsion of Manasseh in the time of Alexander the Great (337-332) Josephus seems to have been "a victim of the strangely erroneous views of chronology which the Jews of his own and of later times have commonly entertained respecting their nation's history in the interval between the Return from the Exile and the victories of Alexander" (H. E. Ryle, *Canon of the Old Test.*, London, 1892, p. 92). But it is not improbable that he is correct to this extent, that the temple was not built until the time of Alexander.

- 6 Blessed be JHVH who did not give us
As prey to their teeth.
- 7 Our soul like a bird has escaped
From the snare of the fowlers ;
The snare has been broken, and we survive.
- 8 Our help is in the name of JHVH,
The maker of heaven and earth.

Psalm 126.—A Prayer for the Restoration of Prosperity.

- 1 When JHVH turned the captivity of Zion
We were like those who dream.
- 2 Then was our mouth filled with laughter
And our tongue with triumphant shouting ;
Then it was said among the nations
“ JHVH has done great things for them.”
- 3 JHVH has done great things for us ;
We are glad of it.
- 4 Restore our prosperity, O JHVH,
Like the brooks in the Negeb.
- 5 They who sow in tears
Will reap with joy.
- 6 He goes forth weeping as he goes,
Bearing the seed-corn ;
He will surely come in with rejoicing,
Bearing his sheaves.

Psalm 133.—A Plea for Unity among the Colonists.

- 1 Behold, how sweet and pleasant it would be
For brethren to dwell in complete harmony :
- 2 It would be like the sweet oil on the head
That flows down on the beard ;*
- 3 It would be like the dew of Hermon that falls
On the mountains of Zion ;
For there JHVH has appointed the blessing—
Life—forevermore.

* 2(b) The beard of Aaron that flowed down to the collar of his garment.

Psalm 138.—A Prayer for the Restoration of David's Dynasty at the Dedication of the Temple.

- 1 JHVH, remember to David
All his efforts !
- 2 How he swore to JHVH,
Vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob :
- 3 " If I enter the tent of my house,
If I ascend to the bed of my couch ;
- 4 If I give sleep to my eyes,
Slumber to my eyelashes ;
- 5 Until I find a place for JHVH,
A habitation for the Mighty One of Jacob— ! "
- 6 Lo, we have heard it in the fertile-plains,
It has reached us in the wilderness.
- 7 Let us enter his habitation,
Let us worship at his footstool !
- 8 Enter, O JHVH, thy habitation,
Thou and the ark of thy strength.
- 9 Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness,
And let thy saints shout for joy.
- 10 For thy servant David's sake
Do not refuse thy Anointed One.
- 11 JHVH has sworn to David :—
It is truth, he will not go back from it ;—
" Of the fruit of thy body
I will place on thy throne.
- 12 If thy sons keep my covenant
And my ordinances that I shall teach them,
Their sons also unto eternity
Will sit on thy throne."
- 13 For JHVH has chosen Zion,
He has desired it for his dwelling (saying) :
- 14 " This is my habitation forever,
Here I will dwell, for I have desired it.
- 15 Her provisions I will abundantly bless,
I will satisfy her poor with bread.
- 16 Her priests I will clothe with salvation,
And her saints will shout in exultation.

- 17 There will I cause a horn of David to sprout forth ;
 I have prepared a lamp for my Anointed One.
 18 His enemies I will clothe with shame,
 But upon him will his crown shine."

Psalm 121.—The Ascent of Ezra. A Promise of JHVH's Protection during the Journey.

- 1 I raise my eyes toward the mountains ;
 Whence will my help come ?
 2 *My help will come from JHVH,*
 Who made heaven and earth.
 3 May he not suffer thy foot to stumble,
 May thy keeper not slumber !
 4 *Behold, he neither slumbers nor sleeps*
 That keeps Israel.
 5 JHVH is thy keeper,
 JHVH is thy protection at thy right hand.
 6 The sun will not harm thee by day
 Nor the moon by night.
 7 JHVH will keep thee from all evil ;
 He will preserve thy life.
 8 JHVH will watch over thy going out and thy coming in,
 Henceforth and forever.

Psalm 130.—A Prayer for the Forgiveness of Sins on Atonement-Day.

- 1 Out of the depths I cry to thee, JHVH !
 O Lord, hearken to my voice,
 2 Let thine ears be attentive
 To the voice of my supplications !
 3 If thou shouldest mark iniquities, Jah,
 O Lord, who then could stand ?
 4 But with thee is forgiveness
 For the sake of the Law.
 5 I hope for JHVH,
 And for his word my soul hopes.
 6 My soul waits for the Lord
 More than they that watch for the morning.

- 7 Ye that watch for the morning !
 Wait, Israel, for JHVH !
 For with JHVH is mercy,
 And with him is redemption in abundance.
- 8 And he will redeem Israel
 From all his iniquities.
- 9 Wait, Israel, for JHVH,
 From henceforth even forever.

Psalm 123.—A Prayer for Deliverance from Contempt.

- 1 To thee I lift my eyes,
 O thou that sittest in heaven.
- 2 Behold, as the eyes of servants
 Are directed toward the hand of the master ;
 As the eyes of a maid
 Are directed toward the hand of the mistress ;
 So our eyes are directed toward JHVH, our God,
 As long as he is gracious to us.
- 3 Be gracious to us, O JHVH, be gracious to us !
 For we have long experienced contempt.
- 4 Our soul is sated
 With the scorn of haughty men,
 With the contempt of the proud.

Psalm 122.—An Exhortation to Peace and Unity within the Colony.

- 1 I am glad when they say to me :
 “ We are going to the house of JHVH.”
- 2 Our feet do indeed stand
 In thy gates, O Jerusalem.
- 3 Jerusalem, that is rebuilt like a city,
 Where ‘ the congregation of Israel ’ assembles.
- 4 For thither went up the tribes, the tribes of Jah,
 To give praise to the name of JHVH.
- 5 Where were set thrones of judgment,
 Thrones of the house of David.
- 6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem ;
 They will prosper who love thee.
- 7 Peace be within thy walls,
 Prosperity in thy palaces.

- 8 For the sake of my brethren and companions
I will certainly speak peace within thee.
9 For the sake of the house of JHVH, our God,
I will seek thy good.

Psalm 127.—An Argument against Nehemiah's Plan. Sons, not Walls, are the City's best Defenses.

- 1 If JHVH does not build the house
In vain do the builders labor upon it.
If JHVH does not guard the city
In vain does the guard watch.
2 It is useless for you to arise early,
To retire late, to eat the bread of toil;
He gives the same to his beloved ones in sleep.
3 Behold, children are an inheritance from JHVH,
The fruit of the womb is his reward.
4 Like arrows in a warrior's hand
So are the sons of youth.
5 Happy is the man
Who fills his quiver with them.
They will not be scattered,
But will drive back the enemy in the gate.

Psalm 128.—The Relation of Personal Piety to Domestic Happiness and the Good of the State.

- 1 Happy art thou that fearest JHVH,
That walkest in his ways.
2 Thou wilt verily enjoy the fruit of thy hands;
Happy art thou, and it is well with thee.
3 Thy wife will be like a fruitful vine
In the inner apartments of thy house;
Thy children like olive shoots
Around thy table.
4. Observe that thus will the man be blessed
Who fears JHVH.
5 JHVH will bless thee from Zion;
And thou wilt see the good of Jerusalem
All the days of thy life;
6 And thou wilt see thy children's children.
Peace be upon Israel!

Psalm 120.—A Complaint against Unfriendly Neighbors.

- 1 When I was in distress, to JHVH I cried
And he hearkened unto me.
- 2 JHVH, deliver my soul from lying lips,
From a deceitful tongue.
- 3 What will he give to thee, and what further give to thee,
O deceitful tongue ?
- 4 Sharp arrows of a warrior
With burning coals of broom.
- 5 Alas for me, that I live with Meshech,
That I dwell beside the tents of Kedar !
- 6 Long enough has my soul dwelt
With the haters of peace.
- 7 I am peaceful ; yet if I speak,
They are ready for war.

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Psalm 131.—The Humility and Resignation of the Colonists.

- 1 JHVH, my heart is not aspiring
Nor are my eyes ambitious ;
And I do not engage in great matters,
Nor in things too hard for me.
- 2 If I have not calmed and quieted my soul
As a weaned child on the mother's bosom*—!

Psalm 129.—The Happy Fortune of Israel and the Woe of the Enemy.

- 1 Greatly have they oppressed me from my youth up—
Israel should say ;—
- 2 Greatly have they oppressed me from my youth up ;
Nevertheless they have not prevailed over me.
- 3 Upon my back the ploughers ploughed
They made their furrows long.
- 4 JHVH, the righteous one, has cut asunder
The cords of the wicked.
- 5 Let them be scattered and driven back,
All that hate Zion.
- 6 Let them be like the grass on the house-tops,
Which withers before it grows up ;

* As a weaned child is my soul within me.

- 7 With which the mower does not fill his hand
Nor the binder of sheaves his bosom ;
8 And may those who pass by not say :
The blessing of JHVH be upon you.
We bless you in the name of JHVH.

Psalm 125.—A Warning to Heretics.

- 1 They that trust in JHVH are like Mount Zion
Which is not shaken, stands fast forever.
2 As for Jerusalem—mountains are around her ;
And JHVH is with his people now and ever.
3 For the dominion of the wicked will not remain
On the lot of the righteous,
That the righteous may not put
Their hands to iniquity.
4 Do good, O JHVH, to the good,
And to the upright in heart.
5 But as for those who turn aside their crooked ways,—
JHVH will destroy them together with the workers of
iniquity.
Peace be upon Israel !

Psalm 134.—The Doxology of the Songs of the Return.

- 1 Behold, praise ye JHVH, all ye servants of JHVH,
Who stand in the house of JHVH by night.
2 Raise your hands toward the sanctuary
And praise ye JHVH.
3 May JHVH, the maker of heaven and earth.
Bless thee out of Zion.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Notes on Psalm 124.

This Psalm has been thought to refer to the dangers impending over the Jews while they were engaged in the work of refitting the walls under the direction of Nehemiah; but the attempts of Sanballat and his confederates were not dangerous enough and were frustrated too soon to have given occasion for the representations in the Psalm. The same argument overthrows the idea of Grætz, who assigns the Psalm to the time when Darius Hystaspis again became interested in the colony (in 520), and thinks the Samaritans are the enemies meant; there is no evidence that the Jews were threatened with a grave calamity from

the attacks of their neighbors at this time. Many commentators find the allusions too obscure to enable reference of the piece to a particular historical occasion. Some explain it in a general way as alluding to the conditions and circumstances of the returned exiles (so Hitzig, Hupfeld). Olshausen thinks of the restoration of independence by the Maccabean wars; while Tilling makes the Psalm an epinicion on the defeat and rout of the Philistines when Goliath was slain. There are several facts which may serve as the basis for the interpretation of the poem. The Psalm recites the experiences of Israel; it is a national song. The strong figures used point to a national disaster of no small moment, which did not, however, come upon the people in all possible severity (cf. vs. 2-6); and the character of the calamity which actually occurred is indicated in v. 7, where an escape from captivity is figuratively described. In view of these facts it seems possible to discover the particular event which gave occasion for the Song. There is here set forth in poetic language an account of the captivity of Judah and of the release of the exiles.* The coming up of the angry Chaldean monarch against his rebellious vassals, with his troops of armed warriors, the threatened utter destruction of Jerusalem and all the inhabitants, the commutation of this penalty to captivity, and the final release from exile by the hand of God, are all briefly referred to in the Psalm.

(1) Most scholars render this verse by: *If the Lord had not been for us* (or *with us*). Such a translation is at variance with the well recognized meaning of the phrase **היה ל** (which is a circumlocution for *to have*), and obscures the peculiar force of the passage. The whole point in this and the following verse lies in the emphatically reiterated statement of the relationship between JHVH and Israel, i. e. that JHVH is Israel's God, and in this sense belongs to Israel. Cf. Ps. 95:7: **יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאִנְחָנוּ עִם מְרֻעָתוֹ וְצֶאֱן יָדוֹ** *For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the flock of his hand*; Ex. 6:7: *And I will take you as my people and will be to you a God*; cf. Hos. 1:9; Gen. 17:7, 8; Ex. 29:45.

The benefits accruing from this relationship, assistance in the hour of need, deliverance from grievous distress, are emphasized in the succeeding verses, and finally in v. 8 the teaching of the whole poem is summed up in a declaration equivalent to the opening statement, that in JHVH is Israel's salvation.

Let Israel therefore recognize, says the poet,† that if JHVH had not been our God, our champion, we might have fared differently.‡ Similarly in Ps. 129, where the same formula occurs, the congregation is exhorted to notice how God has preserved his people in all the past.

* So Rosenmüller, de Wette, Bæthgen.

† Clarisse thinks that v. 1^a was sung by a precentor or a choir, while 1^b directs that the remainder of the Song should be chanted by the entire congregation; so also in 129:1. But it seems that the writer makes use of this repetition to impart vigor to his thought.

‡ Hengstenberg supposes that an apodosis occurs here and in v. 2. But the apodosis is given in vs. 3 seq.

(2) A second element in the picture of the past is now brought out. On the one hand, Israel had JHVH; the crisis, in which the advantage of this possession appeared, came about when men, i. e. a worldly power, the Babylonians, made an attack upon Israel. **אדם** *men* is used here in the same sense as **אנשׁ** in Ps. 66:12: **הרכבת אנשׁ לראשׁנו** *Thou didst cause men to ride over our heads.*

Especially to be noticed is the antithetic parallelism between the two members of the verse. To the worldly power assaulting Israel was opposed the might of JHVH in defence of his people; cf. for the same antithesis Ps. 118:6: **יהוה לי לא אירא מה יעשה לי אדם** *I have JHVH, I do not fear what man can do to me*; also Ps. 56:6; 9:20, 21; Isa. 31:1-3.

(3) With this verse the apodosis begins. The poet dwells upon the awful possibilities that were averted because JHVH's hand interposed; if we had not had JHVH when the Babylonians attacked Jerusalem, then they would have devoured us alive. The figure gives the idea of complete destruction effected with inhuman cruelty; and this might well have been expected, for the enemy's wrath was kindled against Judah. Nebuchadrezzar's anger, provoked by the unfaithfulness of the tributary ruler of Judah, was fanned into flame by the stubborn resistance to the punishment he sought to inflict. The disposition of the besieging army toward the inhabitants of Jerusalem was embittered by the length of the siege. So when the end came, it was likely that the enemy would instantly destroy Israel, just as wild beasts, maddened with thirst for blood, gulp down the quivering flesh of their victims on the spot; cf. Ps. 22:4: **פצו עלי פיהם** *They open wide their mouths at me, like a ravenous and roaring lion*; also Ezek. 22:25; Ps. 7:3; 56:2, 3; 57:4; 35:25; Prov. 1:12. The figure is sometimes used of the capture of Jerusalem and of the Exile, when Israel was as it were swallowed up by the nations; Lam. 2:16: **פצו עליך פיהם כל איבך** *All thy enemies have opened their mouths at thee; they hiss and gnash their teeth, saying: we have swallowed her up*; cf. also vs. 2, 5; Isa. 49:19; Jer. 51:34 (cf. v. 44). **חיים** *while yet alive*, intensifies the idea of a sudden and bitter fate; cf. the imprecation upon the ungodly in Ps. 55:16: **ישיא מות עלימו ידרו שאול חיים** *Let death ensnare them, let them go down to the grave while yet alive*; also Num. 16: 32, 33.

(4) *Waters* are frequently used as a sign of affliction; cf. note on Ps. 130:1. The figure of streams passing over the banks and flooding everything is applied to the incursions and attacks of enemies; cf. Isa. 8:7, 8. **ולכן הנה ארני מעלה עליהם את מי הנהר העצומים והרבים את מלך אשור ואת כל כבודו ועלה על כל אפיקיו והלך על כל גדותיו: וחלף ביהודה שטף ועבר עד צואר יגיע והיה מטות כנפיו מלא רחב ארצך עמנו אל** *Now, therefore, behold, the Lord will bring upon them the waters of the Euphrates, strong and many, the king of Assyria and all his glory; and he will rise over all his chan-*

nels and go over all his banks, and he will pass through Judah, overwhelming and going over, reaching to the neck, and the stretching out of his wings will fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel; cf. Is. 17:12 sq. and Jer. 47:2, where the march of armies is compared with the rush of an overwhelming flood.

As the waters typify the overwhelming numbers and the spread of the Babylonian hosts over the whole face of the country, so the *spring-torrent* (נחל־יה) indicates the sudden appearance and irresistible might of the invading force: in the rainy season the dried-up bed of the wady is quickly filled with an angry, surging flood that sweeps away all that impedes its flow; so suddenly, and with like violence, Nebuchadrezzar's army descended upon the doomed city of Jerusalem, and it seemed that total ruin was inevitable.

(5) נפשנו means not *our soul* but *our life*, as also in Ps. 121:7; cf. Ps. 38:13; וינקשו מבקשי נפשי *Those who seek my life lay snares for me*; also Pss. 35:4; 59:4. Grätz's objection to המים הזידונים *the proud* (or *seething*) waters, is unfounded; זידון may, even in the sense of *proud*, be used in this connection; cf. the similar expressions גאות גל־ך *thy proud waves*, Job 38:11; גאות הים *the pride of the sea*, Ps. 89:10. The waters and torrent describe the strength of the enemy; so זידונים *seething*, with the side notion of *proud*, refers to his pride and haughtiness. Babylon is termed the *most proud* in Jer. 50:31, 32; cf. notes on Ps. 123:4.

(6) These words recall the figure in v. 3. But the supposition of Clarisse that a transposition of verses has taken place, and that v. 3 properly belongs after v. 5, is improbable. After having called attention to the destruction which threatened Israel, and pictured its terrors in a series of strong figures, the poet states his thesis anew; it is sufficient to do this in connection with but one of the figures by which he illustrated the impending woe. The reason we were not devoured alive by the Chaldeans is that our God interposed in our behalf; therefore, blessed be his holy name.

Hitzig declares the Psalm cannot refer to the release from exile, since Israel was actually overwhelmed by the Chaldeans and given as a prey into their power; cf. Jer. 50:17: שֶׁהָפְזָרָה יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲרִיּוֹת הָרִדְחוּ הָרָאשׁוֹן אָכְלוּ מֶלֶךְ אַשּׁוּר *Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away; first the king of Assyria devoured him, and now finally Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, has broken his bones*; and Jer. 51:34 אָכְלָנִי תַמְמָנִי נְבוּכַדְרֶעֶצַר מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל הַצִּיּוּנִי כְּלִי רֵיק בְּלַעֲנִי כְּתַנּוּן *Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, has devoured me, destroyed me, made me an empty vessel, devoured me like a dragon*. The explanation of the apparent difficulty is, however, at hand. He to whose mind the sad scenes attendant upon the capture of the city and the stern realities of the Exile were present, might well paint the facts in gloomy colors. But with the dawn of freedom there is given to the returned

exiles a new view of the past. Bad as were the experiences of the fall of Jerusalem and the captivity, they might have been far worse. The poet can see that the figures he has used in vs. 3 sqq. are too strong and in v. 7 he introduces his own view of the matter.

Teeth are a type of strength and violence; cf. Ps. 57:5: **נפשי בתוך לבאם אשכבה להטים בני אדם שניהם חנית וחצים** *I am among lions, I lie down with furious ones, mean men, whose teeth are spears and arrows*; Ps. 58:7; 8:8; Job. 4:10; Dan. 7:7.

(7) In the mercy of God not only was Israel spared the possible disasters, but the woe that actually befell the people was not lasting.

The figure of the snare is frequently used of wily schemes or plots into which the unwary fall; cf. 1 Sam. 28:9; Job 18:7-10. But it is also applied to the captivity in particular; cf. Ezek. 12:13: **ופרשתי את רשתי עליו ונתפש במצודתי והבאתי אתו כבלה ארץ כשדים** *And I will spread my net upon him, and he will be caught in my snare; and I will bring him to Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans*; Ezek. 19:8, 9; 17:20; Lam. 1:18; Ps. 68:11: **הבאתנו במצודה שמת מועקה במתנינו** *Thou didst bring us into the net; thou didst put affliction upon our loins*.

The points of comparison suggested by the figure are: (1) captivity; (2) the helplessness of the captives; in the prison-house of Babylon the exiles were as incapable of effecting their release as is a bird to escape from the snare;* cf. Lam. 1:14: **נשקד טל פשעי בידו ישתרנו עלו על צוארי חכשיל כחי** *The yoke of my transgressions has been bound by his hand; they are twisted together and come up on my neck; the Lord has made my strength fail, he has given me into the power of those from whom I cannot rise up*; (3) exuberant joy in freedom; the snare is broken, and as for us, we are free! we survive, and have been permitted to return.

(8) The important truth taught in the argument of the preceding verses is here summed up in a general maxim: Our help is in the name of JHVH. Our wonderful preservation and marvelous escape is due to the God of our fathers. In his name, i. e. in what that name represents, the religion of Israel, is the palladium of Israel. The verse may be regarded as a poetic expression of the fact that the Jews survived the Exile not as a nation, but only as a sect; it is also a declaration that the continuance of their existence as such depended on their steadfast allegiance to God. V. 8 lays down the statement that, for all the future, JHVH, who made all things, is the only source of Israel's help. This

* By this is meant a trap made of two quadrilateral frames, like the covers of a book, each covered with a net; it is set with one of the frames in an upright position, while the other lies upon the ground; the fowler pulls a cord which operates a trigger or **כּוֹקֵשׁ**, so that the frame lying flat is brought up against the one standing upright, and the birds are caught. Cf. G. Hoffman, *Versuche zu Amos*, c. 3, 5, in *Zeitschr. fuer Alttest. Wissenschaft*, III (1893) p. 101.

reference to God as the omnipotent Creator (which appears elsewhere in these Psa., 121:2; 134:3), betrays the influence of the teachings of the Deutero-Isaiah.

In the *glorious and terrible* name of JHVH (Dt. 28:58) is expressed his power and majesty. But by the name of God is also meant his reputation, not only among his own people (cf. Isa. 48:9, 11; Ps. 52:11), but among the heathen; hence God is often entreated to act for the sake of preserving the fame which he has obtained; cf. Ps. 109:21: **וְאַתָּה יְהוָה אֲדֹנָי עֲשֵׂה אֵתִי לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ** *But do thou deal with me, O God the Lord, for the sake of thy name*; cf. Psa. 79:9; 25:11; 81:4; 148:11; 115:1. In the name of JHVH, a term at once suggestive of his divine characteristics, and of his reputation for truth and faithfulness, is the bulwark of Israel's defence (cf. Ps. 20:8). If a worldly power should again attempt to destroy the congregation, then JHVH will save his people, if they remain steadfastly true to him.

NOTES ON PSALM 126.

Perhaps no one of the Songs of the Return more definitely discloses its historical reference than does this short but beautiful Psalm, which gives at the beginning a direct statement of its post-exilic origin.* Most commentators agree in assigning it to the early years of the Return. A difference of interpretation obtains, however; for while many consider that in v. 4 is contained a prayer of the colonists in Jerusalem for the return of their brethren still remaining in Babylon, there are but few who perceive a different meaning in the phraseology of vs. 1 and 4.

The opening words of the Psalm give the *terminus a quo* of the period within which it was written; the *terminus ad quem* is furnished by vs. 4 sqq. The occasion which called forth the bright and encouraging piece was the lack of prosperity that troubled the colonists in the times immediately succeeding the first return; the oft-repeated failure of crops had been very disheartening. Prayer for the removal of this woe, and cheering promise of glad times to come, constitute this Psalm, the purpose of which is to encourage the servants of JHVH to work on in patient expectation of that deliverance which, as past events show, God will surely bring.† The piece was probably composed about

* Wolfson regards the poem as referring to the time of Hezekiah when Judah was delivered from the Assyrians. The Israelites in captivity are supposed to hear of this wonderful matter which has excited remark in the world outside of the little kingdom (v. 2.), and to offer up prayer for their own deliverance. But that the speakers in v. 1, who rejoice at the salvation wrought, utter the prayer of v. 4, none will deny; and the suffixes in vs. 2, 3 must refer to the same people. But if Wolfson's exegesis be correct, this could not be; for, granted that v. 1 is spoken by the Israelites, v. 3 cannot be referred to them. There is not the slightest reason to make a difference between those concerned in the turning of Zion's captivity and those who declare their joy and offer the petition. In a somewhat similar way Ps. 85 begins with a reference to the people of Jacob; but that the speaker is the representative of the people is clear from vs. 5 sqq.

† A parallel piece is Ps. 85, in which the facts here briefly alluded to are brought out at length.

the time of Haggai (520). Three sections may be distinguished in the Song: (1) vs. 1-3, Praise; (2) v. 4, Prayer; (3) vs. 5, 6, Promise.

(1) When, by the gracious interposition of JHVH's power, the captivity was closed and we, the exiled servants of Zion's God, were permitted to return to the land of our fathers, in our great astonishment and wonder we were as those that dream. It was not that in the dawn of freedom, the long night of captivity became to them a gloomy dream now happily over (so Joseph Qamchi); cf. Ps. 73:19, 20. **איך היו לשמה כרגע ספו תמו מן בלחות: כחלום מהקיץ** *How have they been destroyed in a moment! How have they perished, been consumed by terrors! As a dream when one wakes, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou wilt despise their image.* But the *tertium comparationis* lies in the unreality of the dream-picture; the news of release was too good to be true, it seemed not a reality, only a happy dream;* cf. Gen. 45:26; Isa. 29:8; Luke 24:41; Acts 12:19.

Zion is put for the city; the two names occur in parallelism in Ps. 51:20: **היטיבה ברצונך את ציון תבנה חומות ירושלם** *Do good in thy kindness to Zion; build thou the walls of Jerusalem*; Jer. 51:35. The downfall of the city sealed the doom of the nation, so the return of the captives of Zion is the forerunner of better things to come. The expression—*turned the captivity of Zion*—is not inapt in view of the fact that the Return was with the Jews a movement of a religious rather than political character. It was in reality the restoration of the Jews to that place where alone, as they believed, they could carry out the requirements of their religion.

The captivity of Zion, i. e. the captives of Zion; so in 2 Sam. 9:12, **מִשְׁכַּב בֵּית צִיבָא** *habitation of the house of Ziba* = inhabitants of the house of Ziba.

(2) The phrases used connote exuberant joy and overflowing happiness; cf. Job 8:21; Isa. 35:10.

Wolfson objects that the Jews, instead of being complimented on their release from exile, were subjected to scorn and reproach, especially by their neighbors; therefore he thinks the passage cannot refer to the Return. But no matter how bitter the feelings which the heathen may have entertained towards the Jews, this would not prevent them from recognizing the great good fortune God had bestowed on Judah in bringing back the people to their fatherland. Further than this, the mixed population of the land seems to have given a friendly reception to the colonists and would have made common cause with them, but the

* A parallel incident in classical history is related in Livy Hist. Lib. XXXIII, 32; when the Romans had vanquished Philip of Macedon, they restored liberty to the Greek cities by proclamation which was made by a crier at the Isthmian games. The great joy caused by this unexpected announcement was equaled by the amazement of the people, who in wonder regarded it as an illusion similar to a dream (*velut somnii vanam speciem*). Cf. Polybius XVIII, 29:7.

spirit of exclusivism, which gradually became a characteristic of the new community, prevented a display of reciprocal cordiality. The point in the verse is that while in the past surrounding peoples might point the finger of scorn at desolated Judah, spoiled of her inhabitants and shorn of her glory, now at least they must observe that the tide of her fortune is again on the flow, her shame is in part removed; no longer can they say: *Where is the God of Israel?*—for he has made bare his mighty arm in their sight, and they must acknowledge: *JHVH has done great things for them*; cf. Isa. 52:10: חֲשַׁף יְהוָה אֶת זְרוֹעַ קְדְשׁוֹ JHVH will make bare his holy arm in the sight of all the heathen, and all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God.

JHVH has done great things, i. e. has acted nobly, magnanimously: cf. Joel 2:20, 21, where the phrase occurs first in a bad, then in a good sense: רֵאֵת הַצִּפּוֹנִי אֲרֻחִיק מֵעֲלֵיכֶם וְהִדַּחְתִּי אֶל אֶרֶץ צִיָּה וּשְׁמָמָה אֶת פָּנָיו אֶל הַיָּם הַקֶּדְמָנִי וּסְפוֹ אֶל הַיָּם הָאֲחֵרִים וְעָלָה בָּאִשׁוּ וְתַעַל צַחֲנָתוֹ כִּי הַגְדִּיל לַעֲשׂוֹת: *But I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive it into a land of drought and desolation, with the front toward the east sea, and the rear toward the rear sea, and the foul odor of it will arise and its stench will go up, because it has done great things. Fear not, O land! be glad and rejoice! for JHVH will do great things.*

(3) With gratitude Israel acknowledges that it was solely through JHVH's mediation that the blessing came. When even the heathen are constrained to attribute the fortune of the Jews to the exercise of JHVH's power, the sheep of his pasture must surely ascribe praise to him for the wonders of his grace. God has done nobly, acted in a manner befitting the great, exalted JHVH. Whatever may be the distressing elements of the present situation, at least there is abundant cause for thanksgiving; as the poet puts it in Ps. 85:2-4: רָצִיתָ יְהוָה אֲרֻצָּךְ שֶׁבַת שְׁבוֹת יַעֲקֹב נִשְׁאָת עֵץ עֹמֵךְ כַּסִּית כָּל חַטָּאתָם אִסַּפְתָּ כָּל עֲבֻרְתָּךְ הַשִּׁיבוֹת מִחֲרוֹן אַפְּךָ *Thou hast been kind to thy land, hast turned the captivity of Jacob. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, covered all their sin. Thou hast taken away all thy wrath, turned from the heat of thine anger*; cf. Jer. 33:10, 11.

And in view of this the congregation exclaims: *we are indeed glad of it.*

(4) It has already been noticed that many* exegetes consider this verse as an appeal for the continuation and completion of the work of the Return; those who embraced an early opportunity to avail themselves of the permission given by Cyrus, are supposed to be longing for the coming of their brethren who for various

* Rosenm., de Wette, Langer, Hupf., Del., Kamph., Cheyne.

reasons have remained in Babylonia. The picture is conceived to be that of a depopulated land, waste and desolate, void of water; and as the dried-up brooks become full again in the rainy season and make the land fruitful, so now depopulated Canaan will receive new life through the coming of fresh colonies. But the necessary thing in the early years of the Return was not an increase in the population, but an increase in the productiveness of the soil, and the removal of the unfavorable conditions of drought. So that there would be no point in praying for a larger number of colonists. Deliverance from the distresses the community was then passing through would naturally be the object of the petition.

Some commentators (as e. g. Luther), taking vs. 1-3 as a look forward into the future, consider v. 4 a prayer that the happy day of deliverance may hasten its coming; to this is opposed the Perf. *היינו* *we were* standing at the head of the narrative.

Several exegetes have perceived a meaning in the phraseology of v. 4 different from that of v. 1. Grætz declares *שוב* cannot mean *bring back*, for the exiles had some time since returned; he therefore suggests to read *שׁוּבָה* *restore*, supplying *נֶפֶשׁ* *life* or *soul* as in Ps. 23:3: *נֶפֶשׁ יְשׁוּבָה* *restore my soul*, he leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake; cf. also Ps. 60:3. But this emendation is unnecessary. Tholuck and Hengstenberg have rightly understood the verse as an appeal for the removal of distresses so seriously affecting the colonists; and the latter hints at the real point in the verse in that he recognizes a play on the frequently recurring expression found here. The error of a copyist in v. 1 (*שְׁבִית* for *שְׁבִית*) and the mistake of the Massorites who suggested *שְׁבִיתָנוּ* here, have obscured the poet's artistic work. There is between *שְׁבִית* *שוב* = *turn the captivity*, and *שְׁבִית* *שוב* = *restore thoroughly*, a paronomasia* at once striking and beautiful, by which the two facts of past good fortune and of trouble now existing are brought into clear, emphatic antithesis: thou hast freed us from exile; for this we can never cease to be grateful; but the good work thus begun has not been carried forward to completion, that which has been effected is not enough; restore now our prosperity.

The *Negeb* is South Palestine, the region lying to the south of Judah, and comprising the country bordering on it to the east and west; it extended beyond Beersheba on the north, while in the south it gradually merged into the desert. The name (*נֶגֶב* = *drought*) is appropriate since upon this district in particular rests the curse of drought. Though once the seat of the cities of Simeon (Josh. 19:1-9), to-day it may scarcely be said to have a permanent population. The

* Cf. the Dissertation of Dr. I. M. Casanowicz on *Paronomasia in the Old Testament*, Boston 1894, p. 80, note 152.

word is definitely used as the proper name of the region in Josh. 19:8; 10:40; Jer. 32:44; 38:18. The slopes and hillsides of the Negeb are furrowed by numerous wadys, channels that in the dry season expose their empty beds to the scorching rays of the sun, while the arid land exhibits the desolating effects of drought; but in the period of rain all this is changed; tumultuous torrents roar and foam, chafing within the old courses, and the once dreary land is clad in pleasant verdure. This wonderful change was the idea present to the poet's mind when he wrote the verse: even so, JHVH, mayest thou restore our prosperity, revive us with thy rich blessings. Cf. Ps. 107:34-38, where the same simile is used with reference to the same matter; especially vs. 35, 36: **ישם מדבר לאגם מים וארץ ציה למצאי מים וישב שם רעבים ויכוננו עיר מושב** *He turns the wilderness into a pool of water, and the dry land into springs of water; there he makes the hungry dwell that they may prepare a city to dwell in; cf. Isa. 35:7; 41:18; 58:11.*

The character of the brooks is clearly defined in Job 6:15 sqq.: **אחי בגרו כמו נחל כאפיק נחלים יעברו: הקדרים מני קרח עלימו יתעלם שלג: בעת זירבו נצמתי בחמו נדעכו ממקומם: ילפתו ארחות דרכם יעלו בתהו ויאברו: הביטו ארחות תמא הליכות שבא קו למו: בשו כי בטחו באו עדיה ויחפרו** *My brothers are deceitful like the brook, like the channel of the brooks that pass away, that become turbid with ice; the snow hides itself in them. In the time they flow they become extinct: when it is hot they are dried up out of their place. The caravans on their way turn aside, go up into the wastes and perish. The caravans of Tema looked, the companies of Sheba hoped for them. They were disappointed in their expectations, they came thither and were ashamed. In Ps. 42:2 **אפיקי מים** are the streams that flowed in the channels and which have been dried up: **כאיל תערנ על אפיקי מים כן נפשי תערנ אליך אלהים** *As the hind pants for the water-brooks, so pants my soul for thee, O God; cf. Joel 1:20.**

(5) This verse is, as has generally been recognized, a proverb setting forth a truth of which v. 6 is a more extended and picturesque presentation. Other proverbial sayings that take their origin from the facts involved in the important works of husbandry, are to be found in the following passages: Prov. 22:8; **זורע עולה יקצר און ושבט עברתו יכלה** *He that sows iniquity will reap mischief, and the rod will be ready for his pride; Job 4:8: **כאשר ראיתי חרשי און זורעי** *Just as I have seen, they who plough iniquity and sow wickedness, reap it; cf. Gal. 6:7, 8, 9; Hos. 8:7; John 4:35; 1 Cor. 15:36 sqq.**

בדמעה ברנה *with tears, with rejoicing: note the position of these words, strongly adversative each to the other.*

(5, 6) While the proverb is perfectly capable of being applied in a general sense, and may simply be the equivalent of the familiar English saying: "every cloud has a silver lining"—yet the addition of v. 6 leaves no doubt as to the

special connotation here, though the wider meaning is not excluded; the picture may refer to the work of settlement and rebuilding (Clarisse, Rosenm., Del.) or of undertakings and results (Hengstenberg). In response to the appeal of the congregation for the revival of their languishing fortunes, the priest gives first a more comprehensive, secondly a more specific promise of the realization of their hopes. "Beginnings," says he, "are often fraught with discouraging hardships and difficulties so that the outlook may be very bad; the first years of the colony in Jerusalem may be very miserable, but it will not always be so. For, while during this season of gloom and despondency, sorrow may lodge with you, in the dawn of the harvest morning joy will come."

Hard indeed were the beginnings; the gladness inspired by the great fact of the Return was counterbalanced by the slow attainment of results; and the Psalm clearly describes the feelings of the time.

(6) **מִשַּׁךְ הָזֶרַע** *the seed-corn*. Some, following Qamchi, render *precious seed*. J. D. Michaelis adopted the idea suggested by Abulwalid and Ibn Ezra that **מִשַּׁךְ** was the *skin*,* i. e. a bag made of skin in which the seed was carried, the material being here put by synecdoche for the thing made from it; this notion commended itself to Grætz. Others (de Wette, Hupf., Kamph., Hgstb., Schultz., Bæthg.) think the phrase refers to the handfuls of seed to be drawn from the sack and scattered over the field.† S. Bochart explains the phrase as said on account of the length of the furrow into which the seed is cast.‡ The primitive meaning of **מִשַּׁךְ** is to draw, and in this connection to draw a line of seed, i. e. to scatter it in a line, the sower moving forward, casting his handfuls upon the soil, while the sown ground stretches behind him in an elongating ribbon; cf. Amos 9:13: **הִנֵּה יָמַי בָּאִים נֹאם יְהוָה וְנָגַשׁ חֹרֶשׁ בְּקֶדֶר וְדָרַךְ עֲנָבִים בְּמִשַּׁךְ הָזֶרַע וְהִטִּיפוּ הָהָרִים עֲסִים וְכָל הַגְּבֻעוֹת תִּתְמוֹגְגֶנָּה** Behold days are coming, saith JHVH, when the ploughman will overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that sows seed, when the mountains will drop down new wine, and all the hills will melt. This seems the preferable explanation, and the phrase may thus be rendered in full: carrying the seed which is to be scattered in a long line on the furrows in the field (so Del., Hitz.); or simply: carrying the seed-corn (Cheyne).

The sower, doubtful of results because of previous disappointments, goes forth with a fainting heart, with tears of sad misgiving, to scatter the seed; blasting and mildew, drought and hail have ruined his hopes in former years, and the prospect is not cheerful. But in the midst of this despondency the poet's words come to his ears: Wait! Beyond these dark clouds hides the sun in shining splendor. Look forward to the day when you will reap with joy at the plenteous

* **מִשַּׁךְ** in this sense does not occur in Hebrew, though the word *masku* "skin" is common enough in Assyrian.

† In German *Saatzug, Saatwurfs*.

‡ Cf. his *Geographia Sacra*, L. iii., c. 12.

harvest; then, at evening, laden with sheaves, you will come with shouts of gladness to praise God's name afresh "for his wonderful works to men." Cf. Ps. 85:13, where a similar promise is given to the colonists: **נָם יְהוָה יִתֵּן הַטּוֹב וְאֶרְצֵנוּ תִתֵּן יְבוּלָהּ** *Yea, JHVH will give what is good, and our land will yield its produce.*

NOTES ON PSALM 133.

The brief poem is of so general a nature that, if it were isolated from connection with pieces whose historical situation is definitely determined by the evidence of their contents, it would hardly be possible to refer it to any special occasion. There is, however, no reason to separate it from the Psalms with which it is now associated. The position of the Song in the Psalter and a linguistic peculiarity (the use of **וְ** with the Participle) suggest a post-exilic date; nevertheless some commentators (Castle, de Wette) suppose David was the author, while Wolfson finds a reference to the work of Hezekiah in uniting the remnant of the ten tribes with Judah and causing the priests and Levites to perform their duties in harmony. Most exegetes, however, see in this a pilgrim-song composed in praise of the assembly of co-religionists at Jerusalem; "it is," says Cheyne (*Origin of the Psalter*, p. 53), "a pure and lovely encomium on the brotherly love fostered by the Jewish *παινηταις*."* It seems more probable that the poem pictures a state of affairs not actually existing at the time, but eminently desirable, as the writer aims to show; the salutary influence of fraternal concord is suggested as the necessary remedy for present ills. Now there was much discord among the returned exiles, not only at the time of Nehemiah† (cf. Ps. 122), but also in the earlier period; political strife caused divisions in the congregation in the days of Joshua and Zerubbabel, between whom there was rivalry. It seems not improbable that the Psalm was written to allay this party-feeling by an appeal to the better nature of the people and especially of their leaders (so Grætz interprets the piece).

The argument of the poem is very simple but forcible. The influence of harmony, suggests the poet, will be both sweet and refreshing, and, permeating all classes of society, will secure the permanence of the community in the place where God has promised to give his blessing.

(1) The interjection with which the Psalm begins calls attention to the thought about to be unfolded: Mark, how good and pleasant it is if those who are members of the same community dwell together in complete harmony. Most commentators find a reference to the gathering of Israel at the feasts; Clarisse

* Cf. W. B. Smith, *Old Test. in the Jewish Church*, London, 1892, p. 212 note.

† Schultz refers to Nehemiah's endeavors to have the people dwell in Jerusalem.

thinks the pilgrims may have sung the Psalm as they reclined around a common festive board, but this seems altogether too special. Mention of Zion, the religious center (v. 8), need not indicate that a religious fraternity in particular is meant (cf. Tholuck); the idea of co-religionists is certainly contained in the term אֶחָיו "brothers,"* but at the same time the notion of common interests in civil and domestic life is also included (Rosenm.). The members of Israel, the church of JHVH, should dwell in complete unity, i. e. in all the relations of life work in harmony to promote the common weal;† then they will become partakers in the blessing that will accrue.

The adjectives שׁוֹבֵר sweet and נְעִים pleasant look forward to the two illustrations about to be introduced.

(2) The influence of harmony and peace within the congregation will in the first place be just as sweet as the odor of the holy anointing oil.‡ Some commentators suppose that the oil is poured on the head in such abundance that it trickles down to the beard,§ and even drips upon the garments.|| But as the stress laid on sweet indicates, the *tertium comparationis* is certainly the sweet, penetrating odor of the ointment (Bæthgen). When this excellent oil is put on the head, the rich perfume communicates itself also to the beard; in the same way the sweet influence of concord will spread through the community; the good results of harmony among the heads, the leaders of the people, will be felt by all classes.

The expression *the beard of Aaron which flowed down upon the border of his garment*—seems to be an unnecessary limitation of the comparison; to be sure it is said that allusion to the anointing of the high-priest is very apt here,¶ since at the feasts he was the principal person (cf. Delitzsch); and moreover the oil was literally poured on his head (cf. Ex. 29:7; Lev. 8:12; 21:10) so that he was הַכֹּהֵן הַמְשִׁיחַ the anointed priest κατ' ἐξοχήν. But the *tertium comparationis* holds true of any case in which good oil is used, as e. g. in the anointing of a guest; cf. Ps. 23:5: תַּעֲרֵךְ לִפְנֵי שֹׁלְחָן נִגְרִי רִשְׁתָּ בְשֶׁמֶן רֹאשִׁי Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; and the holy oil stands simply as an example of an ointment of the best quality. The poet may

* The idea of Grætz, that, since אֶחָיו was used to denote officials (as e. g. the chiefs of different sections of Levites), perhaps the word refers to the high priest Joshua and Zerubbabel, seems also too narrow. Allusion is made to the leaders of the people in vs. 2, 3.

† Schultz thinks of dwelling together in opposition to the dispersion.

‡ This was a sort of pomade; cf. Ex. 30:22 sqq.

§ De Wette, Grætz, Hupf., Del., Hgstb., Schultz.

|| Clarisse, Kamph., Olsh., Thol.

¶ Aaron is explained here as the generic term for high-priest just as Dávid is used in the sense of David's dynasty (cf. 1 Kgs. 12:16; Hosea 3:5); so Hupf., Hitz., de Wette, Rosenm.—Hgstb. thinks Aaron himself is meant, and Del. quotes from a *Haggadah* of the Talmud a statement that: "Two drops of the holy anointing oil remained forever hanging on Aaron's beard like two pearls, as a symbol of reconciliation and peace" (*Horatoth* 12^a).

have had in mind the consecration of a priest; but had he intended to cite the case of Aaron, it seems more probable that he would have placed the name after ראש head. The whole clause—the beard of Aaron that flowed down to the collar of his garment—was perhaps added in the margin of a MS. by some one who was influenced by mention of the holy oil, and who knew of a tradition that Aaron wore a long, flowing beard. The idea that the poet did not write the words is supported by the analogy of the comparison in v. 8^a.

(3) Mt. Hermon is so far from Jerusalem that it has seemed improbable that the poet meant to assert any connection between it and the dew that falls on Mt. Zion. Clarisse thinks ציון Zion is perhaps a scribal error for שִׁיֹּן Sion (Deut. 4:48), which was probably some part of Hermon. Others* think it necessary to understand כַּטֵּל before שִׁירָד when the verse would read: *as the dew of Hermon, as the dew that descends on the mountains of Zion*. Wolfson proposes a similar explanation of the passage, thinking that had the poet written out his thought in full, it would have read thus:

כַּטֵּל חֶרְמוֹן שִׁירָד
עַל הַרְרֵי חֶרְמוֹן
כַּטֵּל צִיּוֹן שִׁירָד
עַל הַרְרֵי צִיּוֹן

*As the dew of Hermon that descends
On the mountains of Hermon;
As the dew of Zion that descends
On the mountains of Zion.*

Two more probable ideas have been suggested: either the dew of Hermon is simply a proverbial sort of expression for copious dew† (Bæthgen); or else the writer actually attributes the dew on the mountains of Zion to the influence of Mt. Hermon; this last idea seems preferable. A heavy dew after a warm day in Jerusalem would naturally be referred to the influence of the cold current of air from the snow-capped mountains in north Palestine (Delitzsch, Schultz). The moisture evaporated from the snows of Hermon is borne southward by the winds, and deposited in the form of dew on the lower hills, where the wilting vegetation is revived and re-invigorated by it. In Palestine, where rains are infrequent, the dews supply the want of showers since the deposition of moisture is very copious.‡ Hence the dew is used as a figure of an enlivening, quickening influence; cf. Prov. 19:12; Mic. 5:6; Hos. 14:6; Deut. 33:13, 28.

* Qamchi, Aben Ezra, Rosenm., de Wette.

† Nowhere in the Holy Land is the dew so heavy as in the districts in the vicinity of Hermon; cf. Van de Velde, *Revue*, Vol. I., p. 97.

‡ "The dews of Syrian nights are excessive; on many mornings it looks as if there had been heavy rain;" G. A. Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, London, 1904, p. 66; this dew

The picture is supposed to indicate the happy result of the fraternal meeting of Jews from all parts of Palestine in Jerusalem; when brethren from the north meet with brethren from the south, it is as if refreshing dew from Hermon descended on the mountains of Zion (Delitzsch); from communion with their fellows, individuals derive new strength and life (Bæthgen).

But the verse stands in parallelism with v. 2; just as v. 2 illustrates the first attribute ascribed to the harmony of brethren, so v. 3 illustrates the second. Hermon is the highest mountain in Palestine; from it comes the dew to the lowest hills, and the country is benefitted. So if the leaders of the people will only work harmoniously, the refreshing influence of their attitude and actions will reach the lowest classes. The whole political and social atmosphere will be purified, and all will feel the cooling, soothing effect. Then may prosperity be expected; for God, who dwells on Zion, has promised that his blessing shall rest on the congregation in Jerusalem. During the Exile in Babylonia, far from Palestine, it was not to be wondered at if the people suffered. But now in the place which JHVH has chosen as his dwelling, and with which the rich promises of Israel's future are connected, the prospects are fair if Israel will only meet the requirements. If only the disability which now hinders progress, i. e. party-strife—is removed, in fulfillment of JHVH's word the permanence of Israel's existence and prosperity will be secured. For God's blessing is appointed to rest on Zion forever.

Notes on Ps. 132.

The allusions to David's work in connection with the ark and the site of the temple have been taken as an index to the date and authorship of this piece. Some have considered David himself the author, who prays that his dynasty may be established. But the entrance of JHVH and the ark into the sanctuary seems to indicate that the temple has been completed; and the Song is, therefore, very properly viewed as intended to be sung at the dedication of the building. Several commentators, then, incorrectly interpreting v. 6 as alluding to the wanderings of the ark before David and his successor placed it in a permanent location, make Solomon the author,* or at least think the Psalm was employed by him at the opening of the first temple.† It has been urged that the former supposition is made probable by the fact that vs. 8, 9, 10 are contained in the prayer of Solomon, 2 Chron. 6:41, 42; all that can be said of this passage, however, is that the Chronist has freely drawn upon the poetic material at his command to procure a suitable

comes from the Mediterranean; cf. G. p. 121, Wellhausen, *Israelit. u. Jued. Geschichte*, Berlin, 1894, p. 5. J. Benzinger, *Hebräische Archäologie*, Freiburg i. B., 1894, p. 31, W. Nowack, *Lehrbuch der Hebräischen Archäologie*, Freiburg i. B., 1894, Erster Band, p. 51.

* Langer, Thol., Del.

† Clar., Rosenm., de Wette.

conclusion to the petition. The external occasion on which the Psalm was rendered, viz., the dedication of a temple to JHVH, may fit the theory of authorship, but the historical occasion forming the background outlined in the argument of the Song, is something different from that of Solomon. For when he officiated at the inauguration of the temple, he was firmly settled on his throne in power and splendor; but, on the other hand, if such emphatic reference is made here to the merits of David, to JHVH's promise and his choice of Zion, it would appear that at the time God seemed to have forgotten these things and that the Davidic dynasty had been dethroned. The same objection stands in the way of Wolfson's theory, according to which Hezekiah was the author and the piece was written after the king had restored the services of the temple, and had sent messengers throughout Israel and Judah to urge the people to be present at the passover in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 30:5, 6). In this way Wolfson tries to explain the phraseology of v. 6, but he bestows little attention upon the other important questions that arise in connection with the poem.

The Psalm* therefore seems to belong to a period when Judah's hereditary ruler was not in the enjoyment of his right, i. e., a time later than 586 B. C.; and it is post-exilic, for the people are in Jerusalem. Olshausen would assign it to the time of Simon Maccabæus, and Hitzig finds the special occasion of its composition in the recovery of Zion from the heathen by Simon (cf. 1 Macc. 13:49-52); vs. 7, 8 would then be explained of the resumption of worship in the temple after it had been cleansed from the abominations of heathenism. A note of triumph because of the recent victory would then be expected, but instead of this the assurance of future success (v. 18) points to a present when the enemy is in power. Alongside of the happy thought that opportunity to worship God in his house is now afforded (vs. 6, 7), comes the discouraging consideration that the Mighty One of Jacob is apparently not exercising his power for his chosen people; Judah is humiliated, there has been suffering for lack of bread (v. 15); hence the prayer that God will accomplish salvation by restoring David's line to the throne; and hence the comforting declaration of JHVH'S faithfulness, the cheering promise that his interest in Zion's welfare will speedily obtain practical demonstration. So de Wette seems justified in referring the piece to the early years of the Return. The difficulties and failures encountered by the colonists in their private business affairs gave full occasion to the prophets of this period to lay special stress upon all guarantees for the realization of the bright anticipations with which the restoration was begun. In particular they aroused a lively interest in the Messianic hope, which was then connected with the prince Zerubbabel; and they promised that when JHVH'S house was built the Messianic time would

* Like Ps. 89.

come. Hence the connection of the two matters in the Psalm: the completion of the temple and the restoration of David's line to the throne.

It appears that (1) the Psalm was composed for the dedication of the second temple. That it was possibly employed on this occasion is allowed by some, who nevertheless declare it was not originally written for this purpose (Rosenm., de Wette); otherwise, it is urged, nothing would be said of Solomon's temple; or else the poem is marred by a rudely abrupt transition from the recital of David's efforts to the situation in 516 B. C. (2) Verse 10 refers to Zerubbabel. (3) The Psalm was certainly written during the governorship of Zerubbabel; but the supposition of Ewald* that it was written by the prince himself is improbable.†

Analysis of the Poem.

Verses 1-5, introductory reminiscences; vs. 6, 7, the present situation; vs. 8-10, dedicatory prayer of the priest, closing with the appeal to place David's son on the throne; vs. 11-18, address of the priest to the congregation, detailing first the terms of JHVH's covenant with David, then promising the fulfillment of the petition that has been offered.

(1-5) *Remember to David*, i. e., call to mind his works for which he merits favor from thee, and give him his reward; cf. Neh. 5:19; 13:14, 22, 31; the same expression may also signify: *call to mind the wickedness of a person and punish him*; cf. Neh. 6:14; 13:29; Ps. 137:7: **זכר יהוה לבני אדום את יום ירושלם** Remember, JHVH, to the Edomites the day of Jerusalem, who said: raze it, raze it even to the foundation. The phrase *Mighty One of Jacob* occurs in but three other passages: Gen. 49:24; Isa. 49:26; 60:16, and in one place, Isa. 1:24, **אביר ישראל** *Mighty One of Israel* is found. The expressions *tent of my house*, *bed of my couch*, are examples of poetic diction, the former possessing a slight flavor of archaism on account of its reference to nomadic life. The hyperbole in vs. 3, 4 is thoroughly in keeping with the Hebrew style of speech; cf. 2 Sam. 1:23^b; Jer. 4:13; Isa. 40:31; it is simply the general idea deducible from the words upon which stress is to be laid. Verse 4 contains a proverbial form of expression doubtless in common use: cf. Prov. 6:4: **אל תתן שנה לעיניך תנומה לעפעפך** *Do not give sleep to thy eyes, or slumber to thy eyelashes.*

The principal thought of this opening section is contained in v. 1: *JHVH, remember how David exerted himself*; there then follows a paragraph of explanation and definition. The purpose of David's efforts will therefore be that defined in

* Grætz has a similar view.

† Ewald regards this Psalm as considerably earlier than the companion piece 89, because it says nothing of the great devastation of Jerusalem and violation of the temple; this is quite probable, since the language of Ps. 89 pictures the state of affairs in Judah in the time immediately preceding Nehemiah's coming, when the Jews were at the mercy of their neighbors.

v. 5. According to de Wette, the poet has in mind David's care in providing a fixed resting-place for the ark. *To find a place*, he thinks, certainly does not mean to build a temple. The great commentator was no doubt influenced by his incorrect exegesis of v. 6; but aside from that verse, an important consideration shows that another reference is intended here. The question arises, What connection has JHVH'S remembrance of David's work with the present? As noticed already, the Psalm is composed of prayer and promise, both of which are concerned especially with the establishing of David's posterity on his throne; God is entreated to act for David's sake, and on account of his covenant he promises to interpose with help. Remembering, then, the origin of the covenant with David, it is reasonable to infer that if any connection exists between the parts of the Psalm, the efforts of David must have been those which procured for him such a great honor from God, and hence they are those he put forth in planning and preparing for the erection of the temple; cf. 2 Sam. 7 and 1 Chron. 22, especially v. 14. *To find a place* need not signify to build a temple (which David did not do), but it very clearly describes the part he played; he began the centralization of the worship of JHVH in Jerusalem. His oath (of which the apodosis, as of that in 131:2 q. v., is suppressed) appears nowhere else, though some (Clarisse, Del.) thinks that in 2 Sam. 7:2 is to be found indication of a vow; it is more probable that the strong form of expression is due to the poet's wish to emphasize the zeal and earnestness of the monarch in hastening the work. To one who reads between the lines another reason for the prominent reference to David's pious zeal will appear when once v. 6, the *cruz interpretum* of the Psalm, has been explained.

(6) Upon the meaning of this verse views many and varied* have been expressed, though in general two different theories of interpretation may be distinguished. According to the first, allusion is made to the ark of the covenant.† *Ephratha* and *the fields of the wood* are supposed to be used here as examples of the places in which the ark at some period found a transient location; the former term, to be sure, stands sometimes as equivalent to *בֵּית לֶחֶם* *Bethlehem*,‡ but so far as can be learned, the ark was never placed in this town; therefore Hengstenberg, who thinks David is speaking here, conceives that the locative expression refers rather to the subject than to the object of the verb in the first clause, i. e., *We in Bethlehem heard of it* (the ark). Many exegetes§ are of the opinion that

* E. Kautzsch, *Die Psalmen Uebersetzt*, Freiburg i. B., 1893, omits it from his translation on the ground that it is unintelligible.

† So Clarisse, de Wette, Hitz., Del., Hupf., Hgsth., Bickell, Cheyne, Schultz.

‡ This was certainly a post-exilic use of the word, which was also the name of a place on the northern border of Benjamin. (Cf. B. Stade, in the *Zeitschr. fuer Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, III., 5 seq.)

§ Gesenius, Clarisse, de Wette, Grætz, Schultz.

Ephratha is here equivalent to *Ephraim*, in which the ark remained at Shiloh until the memorable occasion of its capture in battle by the Philistines (cf. Josh. 18:1; 1 Sam. 4:11). This idea is strengthened by the passages where the gentilic noun אֶפְרַתִּי *Ephrathite* occurs in parallelism with אֶפְרַיִם *Ephraim*; cf. Judg. 12:5: *And the Gileadites took the fords of the Jordan to Ephraim*; וַיֹּדֶה כִּי יֶאֱמָרוּ אֶפְרַתִּי אַתָּה *and it came to pass that if the fugitives of Ephraim said: let me pass over—then the Gileadites would say to him: Art thou an Ephrathite?* Cf. 1 Sam. 1:1; 1 Kgs. 11:26.

The phrase usually translated *the fields of Jaar* or *the wooded fields* is taken as a poetic designation of קִרְיַת יְעָרִים Qirjath-Jearim, a city on the border of Judah and Benjamin whence David brought up the ark to Jerusalem (1 Sam. 7:1, 2; 2 Sam. 6:2). The place was known by several names, e. g. קִרְיַת בַּעַל Qirjath-Baal, Josh. 15, 60; בַּעְלָה Baalah, Josh. 15:9; 1 Chron. 18:6; קִרְיַת יְעָרִים Qirjath-Hajearim, Jer. 26:20; קִרְיַת עָרִים Qirjath-'Arim, Ezr. 2:25; and even בַּעְלֵי יְהוּדָה Baalê-Judah, 2 Sam. 6:2; but it appears to have received its distinctive title, *the city of woods*, from the dense mountain forests in the vicinity, and hence it is thought that יַעַר Jaar = *wood* is an abbreviation of the full name,* calling attention to the chief natural characteristic of the locality. Moreover it is pointed out that after the return of the ark from Philistia, it was placed in the suburbs of the town (Hengstenberg), and so the poet has appropriately put: *in the fields of Jaar*.

Even those who agree upon the references of the locative phrases, differ in their interpretation of the verbs in this verse. Clarisse thus explains the meaning: formerly when we sought for the ark....we heard now that it was in Shiloh, and again that it was in the city of Qirjath-Jearim, but now its location is fixed. The point of the verse would then be an opposition (certainly not literally expressed) between the former uncertain location of the ark and its present fixed resting-place (so Langer); v. 6 is a look back into the past (de Wette) while v. 7 gives a glance at the new order of things. Grätz, however, considers that the opposition lies rather between the two hemistichs of the verse; only a report exists that the ark was once at Shiloh, but at last they found it at Qirjath-Jearim.

Delitzsch, to whom it appears improbable that, in a connection so dominated by memories of David, *Ephratha* should denote *Ephraim*, accepts the idea of a *parallelismus membrorum* and regards *Ephratha* as the name of the district in which Qirjath-Jearim lay;† this view he supports by an appeal to the genealogy given in Chronicles. According to 1 Chron. 2:19, Caleb had by Ephrath a son named Hâr, who was the progenitor of the inhabitants of Bethlehem (1 Chron. 4:4), and

* Cf. Delitzsch.

† Hitzig and Cheyne incline to the same view.

whose son, Shabal, was in turn progenitor of the people of Qirjath-Jearim (1 Chron. 2:50); so that the latter city is the daughter of Bethlehem. This explanation is ingenious but very uncertain; it is rather a doubtful proceeding to build such definite ethnographical and geographical hypotheses upon this genealogy, in which the same place appears under the name Ephrathah as wife and under the name Bethlehem as son of Salma (1 Chron. 2:51) and as son of Hâr (1 Chron. 4:4).*

Tiling (quoted and approved by Rosenm.) supposed that the verse embodies a veiled allusion to calamities that occurred in connection with the ark in former years and per contrast a glance at the happy present; the poet does not mention Shiloh, but the region of Ephrathah, where Israel suffered defeat and the ark was taken; he does not name Qirjath-Jearim itself, but the field of the woods where God destroyed so many persons because they irreverently looked into the sacred ark;† how sad were the conditions of those times, how shameful the state of the religion! But now God has chosen a place to dwell in perpetually, and thus Israel has both liberty and confidence in approaching his presence.

For several reasons the foregoing theories of reference to the ark must be rejected: the ark has not been mentioned, though mention of David's zealous services in the interest of the religion suggests his act of bringing the sacred box from the obscure city in the woods to the capital of his kingdom. But the service of the monarch upon which stress is laid in vs. 3-5 is that for which he obtained the promise of the perpetuity of his dynasty, viz., his earnest desire and active preparation to build a temple for JH VH. So that from the words and thoughts of the preceding portion of the Psalm there can be deduced no reason for interpreting the pronouns in v. 6 of the ark. And on the other hand, such an interpretation gives the verse no connection with what follows; for v. 7 is then not the natural sequence of v. 6, since upon the announcement of the recovery of the ark there would naturally follow an account or intimation of what was done with it, or at least something to show what the news has to do with the argument of the Psalm. But there is nothing of the sort. It is true, some (e. g. Rosenm.) would obtain a connection by supposing that an opposition is intended between the condition of the religion as shown in v. 6 and that implied in v. 7, in which the poet quickly passes on to the time when the faithful in Israel were able to speak of a habitation of God as already existing. But the transition of thought, from the finding of the ark at Qirjath-Jearim to the mutual exhortation of pious worshippers to assemble in JH VH'S house, is too harsh and abrupt, and would be so even if, as Delitzsch thought, the house was the tent erected by David for the reception of the ark (2 Sam. 6:17); and to remedy this Grætz proposes a textual emen-

* Cf. Hupfeld's *Die Psalmen, Zweite Aufl., herausgegeben von E. Biehm*, 3 Band, Gotha, 1878, p. 342, note.

† Cf. 1 Sam. 4:3, 8; 6:18, 19.

dation in v. 7; Olshausen also accounts for the lack of a connecting link by suggesting a flaw in the text or the interposition of a special chorus. In any case, why v. 7, which obtains connection with vs. 8sq. through the idea drawn as a natural inference from its language, should be preceded, not, as the situation demands, by at least a hint at the accomplishment of David's wish, but by allusion to the ark, is clearly unaccounted for. And at all events, the idea of a rude transition and a concealed antithesis is certainly not to be preferred to the easy, simple explanation of which the language is capable.

According to the second theory, v. 6 instead of standing in antithetic parallelism to v. 7, forms the necessary introduction to it, bringing in with poetic diction, but in a logical way, news of the completion of JHVH'S house.

Venema (who supposed that the verb of hearing refers to the summons of the messengers sent out by Solomon to invite the Israelites to the dedication of the temple, 2 Chron. 5:2) conceived that under the terms *Ephratha* and *the fields of the wood* is included the whole country as made up of arable land and forest districts, the former term standing for the places adjacent to Jerusalem or the fertile regions, while the latter refers to the uncultivated districts, especially Lebanon. Of the same opinion were Ewald, Kamphausen, Hupfeld, and finally Wolfson. This seems to be the correct interpretation of the phrases. יער, usually translated *forest*, properly signifies *unimproved property** (English *bush*), and is most aptly rendered *wilderness*; and *Ephratha*, which from its etymology (from stem פרח produce, bring forth) means *fertile cultivated ground*, naturally denotes the *fertile-plains*. Wolfson compares the phrase מִדָּן עַד בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע From Dan to Beersheba, i. e. from one end of the land to the other.

The verbs stand in parallelism and are in sense equivalent: *We heard it* (viz. a report) *in the open, fertile plains, we found it* (i. e. the news reached us) *even in the sparsely settled hill-country*; or, in other words, the news spread all over the country.

The report that obtained such wide circulation cannot be the announcement of David's purpose, nor of the completion of Solomon's temple, nor yet of Hezekiah's invitation to participate in the Passover; such references seem incompatible with the latter part of the Psalm, which pictures a state of affairs in post-exilic times. Nor is it the exhortation in v. 7 that the people have heard; this is inspired by the news. But vs. 8-5 and 7 suggest what is meant—viz., news that the temple has at length been finished, and that the day of dedication has been appointed. Prominence is given to David's work and plans primarily because on account of these the promise referred to in v. 11 was made; but also the congregation perceives a parallelism between the present occasion and the past; David took great pains to provide for the erection of the temple; so too the colonists, in their pov-

* Cf. P. Haupt, in *Beiträge zur Assyriologie*, I., 123, note.

erty and distress, have by a great effort at last succeeded in building a house for JHVH.

(7) The news is given a most enthusiastic reception, and the mutual exhortation is heard everywhere: Let us assemble at Jerusalem, and bow in worship and prayer in the temple. *The footstool of JHVH* refers primarily to the ark, which was the visible symbol of his presence. But the phrase means in a more general sense the temple, where JHVH reveals himself and communicates his will concerning Israel, and whither the congregation must resort for the purposes of prayer and sacrifice; cf. Lam. 2:1: **איכה יעיב באפו אדני בת ציון השליך משמים ארץ תפארת ישראל ולא זכר הדום רגליו ביום אפו** *How the Lord has covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, cast down from heaven to earth the glory of Israel and has not remembered his footstool in the day of his wrath!* Cf. Ps. 99:5; 1 Chron. 28:2.

(8) The two principal elements of the situation have already appeared: Israel assembled at the services on the day of dedication and the priest at prayer. The supplication now begins again.

When the temple was burned in 586 JHVH was thought to have retired to the distant recesses of the north.* Now that a house has been erected for him, he is besought to make this his dwelling, and to resume the interrupted relations to the people: *here manifest thyself as of old, here let the ark of thy strength be placed*,—i. e. the shrine containing the symbol of his strength, the place where the Law was kept; this place in Jewish synagogues of to-day is termed **ארן הקודש** *The Ark of Holiness*. The ancient ark has been replaced by the more spiritual palladium of Israel, the inspired Word of God.

(9) *To be clothed with* is a common figure signifying the possession in a very marked degree of the quality, disposition, etc., spoken of; cf. Ps. 109:18 sqq., 29: **לבשי שוטני כלמה ויעטו כמטיל בשתם** *Let my adversaries be clothed with disgrace, and let them wrap themselves in their shame, as in a garment*; Ps. 93:1; 104:1; Job 8:22; Ezek. 26:16.

Hitzig supposes that **צדק** *righteousness* does not actually mean uprightness, but refers to the white robes, symbolizing purity before God, in which the priests

* Cf. Ezek. 1:4; 11:22 sqq.; here the mountain of the assembly of the gods was situated; cf. Isa. 14:13, 14. Vid. A. Jeremias, *Die Babylonisch-Assyrischen Vorstellungen vom Leben nach dem Tode*, Leipzig, 1887, pp. 121 sqq. Friedrich Delitzsch, *Wo Lag das Paradies?* Leipzig, 1881, p. 118, identifies the Har-mô'êd of Isaiah 14:13 with the Cuneiform xarsag-(gal-)kurkura or mountain of Aršlu which he supposes lay in the north. But P. Jensen, *Die Kosmologie der Babylonier*, Strassburg, 1890, pp. 204 sqq., regards this identification as unjustifiable; for the Har-mô'êd is in heaven and is in Isaiah directly opposed to She'ôl to which xarsag-(kal-)kurkura or Aršlu corresponds; in Isaiah nothing is said of a relation of the gods to the Har-mô'êd; likewise the xarsag-(kal-)kurkura is nowhere designated as the place of the assembly of the gods, most of whom dwell in heaven; the Har-mô'êd is situated in the extreme north; this is not said of the xarsag-(kal-)kurkura, which Jensen thinks denotes the whole earth as a mountain.

performed certain duties; cf. Lev. 6:3sq., in English version 10sq. This seems unnatural and far-fetched. It refers rather to the correct behavior of the priests and the upright exercise of their office; cf. the similar language in Job 29:14: צֶדֶק לְבַשְׁתִּי וְיִלְבַּשְׁנִי כַמִּטְוִי וְצִנִּיף מִשְׁפָּטִי *I put on righteousness and it clothed me; my uprightness was a robe and a head-dress.*

May they shout for joy may have suggested the idea that by the *saints* the Levites are meant (so the *Targum*, Clarisse, Grætz, Wolfson), since this class of attendants in the temple furnished the choirs. But according to the regular use of the word חֲסִידִים are the pious members of the congregation, those devoted to the service of JHVH, in opposition to faithless and recreant members; thus in Ps. 31:24 the expression occurs in parallelism with אֱמוּנִים *the faithful*: אֲהַבּוּ אֶת־יְהוָה כָּל חֲסִידָיו אֱמוּנִים נֹצֵר יְהוָה *Love JHVH, all ye his saints; JHVH preserves the faithful.* The meaning is seen quite clearly in Ps. 148:14: תְּהַלֵּל לְכָל חֲסִידָיו לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַם *And he raises up a horn for his people, the Israelites, a people near to him*; cf. Ps. 37:28; 97:10; 149:1. Here and in v. 16 the pious laity are so designated. The sense is: make the people who love thee rejoice by dwelling among them and by granting to them the fulfillment of their petitions.

(10) This prayer belongs with the preceding vs. 8 and 9, and is spoken by the same person; the *anointed one* himself does not speak, but the petition is offered in his behalf. As Hupfeld observes, the passage 2 Chron. 6:41 sq. where vs. 8sq. of this Psalm appear, gives no clue to the interpretation of this verse; the Chronicler (writing circa 300 B. C.) has simply availed himself of the Psalms existing in his day to make a suitable conclusion for the prayer he puts in the mouth of Solomon; although even then, as in later times (cf. the *Targum*), the verse may have been interpreted as referring to Solomon.

Do not refuse, literally: *do not turn away the face of*, an expression meaning to reject a petition; cf. 1 Kgs. 2:20 (also vs. 16, 17): *And she said, I have a small request to make of thee*; אֵל תִּשָּׁב אֶת פָּנַי *do not refuse me*; and the king said to her: *ask it, my mother*, כִּי לֹא אֲשִׁיב אֶת פָּנַי *for I will not refuse thee.*

מִשִּׁיחַ *anointed* is used of a king of Israel, as e. g. in 1 Sam. 24:7, 11; but the term has a very wide range of application, and may denote any one who has received from God a special commission of a religious character. Even the Persian Cyrus, God's agent to bring about the release from captivity, is given this title, Isa. 45:1. It is one of the terms by which the high-priest was distinguished, Lev. 4:35; and Israel itself is called a *Messiah*, Hab. 3:13; Ps. 84:10; 89:39, 52. But in the special sense which became most familiar in post-exilic times, the epithet is applied to the ideal descendant of David, with the advent of whose reign the time of Israel's glory and power was to be ushered in, when all mankind would be brought under the sway of JHVH'S scepter. This does not

imply that the person so named is at present a king (as Hengstenberg seems to suppose), but only that with that person the bright hopes of Israel's future are connected, and that he it is whom JHVH has chosen as his champion to subdue the nations. As seems clear from the Psalm, the individual spoken of in this verse is not yet on the throne; so it is possible that the words may refer to Zerubbabel, whom the prophets Haggai and Zechariah regarded as the Messiah who was to regain the lost independence of Judah.

David's merits as a zealous servant of God (cf. vs. 1 sqq.) are made the basis of the plea: Remember, Lord, the efforts of David to honor thee, and do not refuse the prayers of thy people and disappoint their hopes of national independence by rejecting the lineal descendant of thy servant to whom thou hast sworn. There was special reason why the people should expect the Messianic revolution now; the temple had been finished, thus bringing to a close the 70 years of captivity and desolation prophesied by Jeremiah (c. 25:8 sqq.); now the nations should be overthrown and Zerubbabel should sit on his throne in majesty and power.

(11) The response to the petition is prefaced by a brief review of God's promise to David, which according to 2 Sam. 7:4 sqq. was given through the prophet Nathan.

In the Pentateuch a sworn agreement is the usual form of compact. So here God is represented as having confirmed his promise in the most emphatic manner possible; cf. Ps. 89:4, 36, 50. This was necessary because the faith of the people, shaken by the opposition between the ideal and the actual, needed to be established. God has sworn his irrevocable oath; to doubt now is to disbelieve in him. The positive assurance: *it is truth* (cf. 2 Sam. 7:28),—is supported by the negative assertion: *he will not deviate from it*; cf. Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Ps. 110:4. The same thought is expressed more strongly and at greater length in Ps. 89:29, 34–38.

Of the fruit of thy body, i. e. one of thy descendants; cf. Deut. 7:13; 28:53; Ps. 127:3; thy sons will continue to occupy thy throne, I will establish thy dynasty after thee.

(12) An important condition is attached to this promise. David's descendants may by disobedience and faithlessness debar themselves from all claim to the throne. Only by observance of God's law can they hope to secure the Kingdom for themselves and their posterity; cf. 2 Sam. 7:14 sqq.; 1 Kgs. 8:25; Ps. 89:31 sqq.

(13, 14) The priest now turns to the assembled people and communicates to them the comforting answer to the prayer. Whatever becomes of the royal family, the congregation will not be disappointed under any circumstances. For, it must be remembered, God has chosen Zion, i. e. Jerusalem, as his place of

abode; cf. Ps. 78:68; 87:2. Israel is his chosen people; hence they may reasonably expect that he will interpose in their behalf, save them from all troubles and defend them from all enemies.

(15) God will ensure abundant crops so that there will be food in plenty, and even the poor will have enough to eat.

Clarisse fancifully supposes that by *provisions* the income of the temple is meant, and that the *poor* are the Levites who were supported by gifts from the other tribes; but there is no allusion in the Psalm to a lack of faithfulness on the part of the people to the requirements of the Law.

(16) The priests will receive wisdom and power to save their flock by inculcating the fear of God; should the people sin, the priests will be able to correct their faults and to teach them the right way. And, on the other hand, the faithful members of Israel (cf. v. 9) will shout in exuberant joy because of their fortunate circumstances and the many blessings they enjoy.

(17) In **אֶצְמִיחַ** *I will cause to sprout*, is contained an allusion to the **צֶמַח** or *sprout*, a term applied to the Messianic king; cf. Jer. 23:5: **הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נָא יְהוָה וְהִקְמַתִּי לְדוֹר צֶמַח צְדִיק וּמֶלֶךְ מֶלֶךְ וְהַשְׁכִּיל וַעֲשֵׂה מִשְׁפָּט וְצִדְקָה בָּאָרֶץ** *Lo, the time is coming, saith JHVH, when I will raise up to David a righteous sprout, and a king will reign and prosper, and will execute righteousness and justice on the earth*;* Jer. 33:15; Zech. 3:8; 6:12. The horn is a symbol of strength; thus in the *Blessing of Moses*, Deut. 33:17, it is said of Joseph: **קַרְנֵי רָאִם קַרְנֵי** *His horns are like the horns of a wild bull*, i. e., his strength is irresistible. *To cut off the horns of a nation* is to strip it of its power, make it defenceless; cf. Lam. 2:3: **גָּרַע בַּחֲרִי אֶף כָּל קֶרֶן יִשְׂרָאֵל** *He has cut off in fierce wrath every horn of Israel*; Ps. 75:11; Jer. 48:25; while *to exalt the horn* means to bestow power and to give victory; cf. 1 Sam. 2:10; Ps. 92:11; Lam. 2:17.

A lighted lamp denotes existence and good fortune, just as the extinguishing of the light is a picture of ruin and destruction; cf. Prov. 13:9: **אֹור צְדִיקִים יִשְׂמַח וְנֵר רָשָׁעִים יִדְעַךְ** *The light of the righteous will be joyous, but the lamp of the wicked will be put out*; Prov. 20:20; 2 Sam. 21:17; Job 21:17; 18:6. *To prepare a light* for a person will then mean to give him success and assure his constant welfare; cf. Ezek. 29:21; Ps. 18:29.

My anointed refers to the same person as in v. 10.

The sense of the verse will therefore be: I will cause the power of David to sprout forth afresh, and a strong representative of his dynasty will sit on the throne, whose reign will be marked by glorious success and continue to shine in splendor. The permanence of David's dynasty is compared to a constantly burning lamp like, e. g., *the perpetual lamp* **נֵר תָּמִיד** before the altar; cf. 1 Kgs.

* Cf. Zech. 6:9; Prof. Haupt, *Note on Ps. 110*, in *Johns Hopkins University Circulars*, July, 1894, p. 110.

11:36; 15:4; 2 Kgs. 8:19; Ps. 18:29. And so here the declaration is reiterated: *the lamp of the dynasty will not be extinguished.*

(18) His enemies will not overthrow him, but through divine assistance he will be able to frustrate all their undertakings against Israel; cf. Hag. 2:20 sqq. If the Persians should attempt to assert their dominion over Palestine, they will meet with disaster and defeat. The glory and fame of the prince will be advanced by this vindication of his power, and the crown encircling his brows will shine with fresh luster and beauty.

[CONTINUED IN NEXT NUMBER.]

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NOS. 3 AND 4.

A CRITICAL COMMENTARY ON THE SONGS OF THE RETURN WITH A HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION AND INDEXES.

By DANIEL GURDEN STEVENS, Jr.

PART III.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

[CONTINUED FROM LAST NUMBER.]

Notes on Psalm 121.

This Psalm has seemed to lend considerable support to the theory which makes these pieces *Songs of Feast-Journeys*. The contents clearly suggest preparation for a journey to Jerusalem; and many exegetes have concluded that the poem was intended to be used by pilgrims, and that it describes the approach to the Holy City.* Thus Hengstenberg terms it an "Evening Song of the Sacred Pilgrim-Journeys" (*Abendlied der heiligen Pilgerzuege*), and thinks it was to be sung when the travelers had come in sight of Jerusalem. In a somewhat similar way Tiling conjectures that the Psalm was sung by the exiles on the Return when they were at last able to see the mountains of Judea in the distance. But it is clear that the terms of the description do not admit of such an interpretation. Nothing in the Psalm shows that the journey is nearing the close or even that it has been begun. The undertaking is something extraordinary and attended with no little danger, and some persons hesitate to incur the risks involved, so that most emphatic assurance of divine protection is required. Hence the six-fold repetition of the word שׁמֶר *keep*; in this, however, Hitzig finds an allusion to the Samaritans שְׁמֶרִים between whom and the Jews there was border-strife in the Maccabean period (cf. 1 Macc. 10:30-38;

* Clarisse, Hupf., Kamph., et al.

11:28). For the same reason the Psalm might just as well be assigned to an earlier time, but in neither case is the situation pictured in the Song accounted for.

Yet more unsatisfactory is the explanation given by Wolfson: the Psalm, he thinks, refers to the captivity of the ten tribes; Israel, as in former years, had forsaken JHVH to worship the heathen deities whose shrines were situated on the hills; the poet now seeks to win back the faithless people to the true God. The language of the Psalm does not justify such an idea. The hills, to all appearances, are not the seat of heathen worship, but the objective point to reach which assistance is needed; a contrast between JHVH and idols is nowhere visible, nor yet an exhortation to repent and turn to God, such as would be expected in a piece of the nature Wolfson takes this to be.

The description fits the state of affairs among the Jews in Babylonia when preparation was being made for the Return. Many persons unwilling to leave their possessions, as well as others who were really timid, found in the dangers of travel an excuse for remaining behind. Thus the Psalm might refer to events that occurred in 537, and some (Rosenm., Delitzsch) have so explained it. But it fits even better the situation described in Ezra's *Memoirs* (Ezra 8:21 sqq. cf. v. 31); Ezra and his companions had no military escort to protect them on the journey, and so on the eve of their departure they sought help from God against the enemies they might meet on the way. The Song might very well have been employed in this service of fasting and prayer.

The verses are closely connected in pairs, which unite to form two stanzas: (a) vs. 1-4, an antiphonal section containing a dialogue between a faint-hearted or sceptical person (vs. 1, 3) and a true believer (vs. 2, 4);—(b) vs. 5-8, an inspiring address by the priest or a chorus to the congregation, confirming the statements of the second speaker.

(1) *I lift up*, etc., i. e. *I raise my eyes and look*; a shortened form of the familiar expression in the Pentateuch,* e. g. in Gen. 13:10: וַיִּשָּׂא לוֹט אֶת-עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא *And Lot raised his eyes and saw*; cf. Gen. 13:14; 31:1, 2; 17:2; 22:4, 13. Notions of pride and worship (Wolfson) are not necessarily connected with the phrase, but must be indicated by the context; cf. 2 Kgs. 19:22: אֶת מִי חָרַפְתָּ וְגִדַּפְתָּ וְעַל מִי הִרִימֹת קוֹל וְחָשָׂא מְרוֹם עֵינֶיךָ *Whom dost thou reproach and blaspheme, and against whom hast thou lifted up thy voice, and haughtily raised thy eyes?* Deut. 4:19; Ezek. 18:6, 15, 12.

Some† suppose that the mountains of Jerusalem, especially Zion where God sits (Ps. 87:1; 15:1; 3:5; 48:3; Isa. 2:3), are meant, and that the speaker looks thither for help. Others (Langer) regard the mountains as the *Kiblah* toward

* Cf. the Assyrian expression ina ittašī "to lift up the eyes" to some one, i. e. be fond of him; *Nimrod Epos* VI., 3.

† Hupf., Hgstb., Bæthgen.

which the Jews turned in praying; cf. 1 Kgs. 8:35, 38, 44, 48; Dan. 6:10. Qamchi thought of watchers on the hills anxiously looking for the approach of help. Similarly Tholuck had in mind the men in a beleaguered fortress, who look toward the surrounding hills on the summits of which friends hastening to give aid will first be seen. It is clear from vs. 3 sqq. that protection during a journey is the help needed. And it seems most natural to take that point toward which the speaker looks as the place he desires to reach; when he considers the various dangers of the journey, he realizes the need of potent assistance and so propounds the serious question. The mountains, i. e. those of Palestine in general (Delitzsch), stand as goal-posts marking the journey's end; they are not the source of help, for the speaker does not know whence aid may be derived, and to him the proposed undertaking seems therefore impracticable.

(2) Many exegetes* hold that the poet raises the question in v. 1 simply to give occasion for the answer here, which is thus strongly emphasized. Others† think of the two sides of an individual's character; the better self answers the question of doubt. It appears more likely that a dialogue between the representatives of two elements in the congregation is intended here; the voice of faith responds to the question inspired by timidity and unbelief. Mention of the mountains suggests to the believer the holy hill of JHVH, and the answer springs at once to his lips. The omnipotence of Israel's God, manifested in his works, is, he declares, surety for the safe conduct of the travelers.

(3) Vs. 3 and 4 are usually taken as a continuation of the response‡ in v. 2, or are included with vs. 5-8 to form a chorus (Clarisse, Rosenm.) or address to the congregation. Either alternative is forbidden by the form and language of the two verses. Thus v. 3 is plainly addressed to the person who thinks help will come from God, and expresses the hope that his expectation may not be vain. In strong opposition to the idea of such a possibility the believer declares his unfaltering faith in God's character as a defender (so Olshausen). Any other explanation involves unnecessary difficulty and obscurity. It is hard to believe that the same person would first put in the weak form of a wish the idea he immediately afterwards affirms so vehemently. Again the very fact that the speaker of v. 3 suggests that God may fall asleep seems to show he did not place much reliance on assistance from such a quarter; the words appear to be those of a sceptic and fit very well in the mouth of the speaker of v. 1. With a sneer he reminds the believer of the long and difficult way; rivers must be crossed and mountains ascended; robbers may lie in ambush by the road, wild beasts will prowl about the camps. So that it is to be hoped that the keeper will prove efficient and vigilant.

* Hupf., Hgstb., Del., Cheyne.

† Kamph., Bæthgen.

‡ De Wette, Del., Hitz., Bæthgen.

To *stumble* is aptly said with reference to travel on a long journey. Stumbling is also a figure of calamity; cf. Deut. 32:35; Ps. 66:9; 38:17; 73:2; 55:23; 10:6; 17:5.

Slumber; cf. 1 Kgs. 18:27: **כִּי שָׁיחַ וְכִי שָׁנָה לוֹ וְכִי דֶרֶךְ לוֹ אֲוִלִי יֵשֶׁן** *Either he is meditating or has gone aside, or is on a journey; perhaps he is asleep and must be awaked.* By such notions the heathen excused the indifference of their deities to their petitions.* And to Israel, oppressed and suffering, it seemed at times as if JHVH were asleep; cf. Ps. 44:24: **עֲוֹרָה לָנֶצַח לָמָּה תִישָׁן אֲדֹנָי הַקִּיצָה אֶל תִּזְנַח לָנֶצַח** *Awake! why sleepest thou, O Lord? Awake! do not cast us off forever.*

(4) *Behold*—an emphatic interjection calling attention to the unqualified rejection of the aspersion cast on JHVH's faithfulness. *He who keeps Israel never sleeps*; neither will he carelessly allow himself to become wrapped in heavy slumber, nor, overcome with weariness, will he seek a moment's repose. As in the days of old, in the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night he led Israel through the wilderness (cf. Ps. 78:14), so now he will exercise constant, unfailing care for the returning exiles.

(5) The difference between the character of the address which now begins and the speech in v. 3 is self-evident. Olshausen correctly regards this stanza as the confirmation, by higher, priestly authority, of the believer's remarks. The several verses reiterate in detailed exposition the thought contained in vs. 2, 4.

JHVH is thy keeper, you do well to repose trust in him. Consider his power and faithfulness and remember he is your God; in view of this well may you say: **בְּשָׁלוֹם יִחְדּוּ אֲשַׁכְּבָה וְאִישָׁן כִּי אַתָּה יְהוָה לְבָדֵךְ לִבְטַח תִּשְׁכְּנֵנִי** *In peace will I both lay me down and sleep, for thou, JHVH, alone makest me dwell in safety* (Ps. 4:9).

JHVH is thy protection, literally: *shadow*;† this is used as a figurative expression for protection in general; cf. Ps. 17:8, 9; 91:1-4; Num. 14:9; Isa. 51:16. But the term seems to refer primarily to shelter from the heat of the sun; cf. Isa. 32:2: **כַּצֵּל סִלַּע כִּבְרָה בְּאֶרֶץ עִיפָה** *As the shadow of a great rock in a desert*; Isa. 25:4; 4:6. In the present passage both senses, literal and figurative, find application.

JHVH will stand at the right hand of the believer, i. e., will act as a champion, or to use a familiar phrase, as a *right hand man*;‡ similarly in Ps. 110:5 it is said of Zerubbabel: § **אֲדֹנָי עַל יְמִינֶךָ מִחֵן בְּיוֹם אֲפֻ מַלְכִּים** *The Lord on thy*

* Cf. the *Iliad*, I., 606.

† This hemistich might be divided into two separate sentences, but the division would have no effect on the sense, except to emphasize the latter clause.

‡ It should be noticed that the same position is occupied by accusers; thus Zechariah (c. 3:4) represents Satan standing in a hostile attitude at the right hand of Joshua; cf. Ps. 109:6.

§ Cf. *Johns Hopkins University Circulars*, July 1894, p. 110.

right hand will smite kings in the day of his wrath; and again in 109:31 God is represented as the savior of his oppressed servant: **כִּי יַעֲמֵד לְיָמִין אֲבִין** *For he stands at the right hand of the unfortunate to save him from those who condemn him.* With such a defender Israel need have no fear.

(6) Some (Hupf. Kamph) have thought that the sun and moon are mentioned here simply in parallelism as in Josh. 10:12, 18; Ps. 72:5; Is. 24:23, and deWette thinks the verse is a poetic form of the thought that neither by day nor by night will any mishap befall the travelers; this may be. But there is also sufficient reason for naming these luminaries as agents of mischief. The particular evil to be feared from the sun was of course the excessive heat which threatened sun-stroke; a familiar case of this is described in 2 Kgs. 4:18-20; cf. Isa. 49:10; Jon. 4:8. The moon is named because to it are referred the rapid fall in temperature after sun-down, the extreme cold of the night and the injurious effects of this atmospheric change upon a man's physical system. The eyes especially are affected with a painful malady. The Arabs still attribute blindness to the influence of the moon's rays on those who sleep in the open air. Then too the moon-beams were thought to produce an injurious effect on the mind.* Grætz also finds in the verse an allusion to the Persian idea that the sun and moon exercised a demoniacal influence. Heat and cold, however, are the evils on which special stress is to be laid; cf. Gen. 31:40: **הֵייתִי בְיוֹם אֲכַלְנִי חֶרֶב וְקָרָח בַּלַּיְלָה** *Thus I was: by day heat consumed me and frost by night;* Jer. 36:30.

(7) Not only from ordinary dangers which must in the nature of the case be encountered, but from all perils, anticipated or unexpected, JHVH will deliver his people; their lives are safe in his hands.

(8) *Going out and coming in*; Clarisse thinks of the safe arrival of the pilgrims in Jerusalem and their return home. In the formula all the acts of daily life are summed up; cf. Deut. 28:6: **בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה בְּבוֹאֶךָ וּבְצֵאתֶךָ** *Blessed wilt thou be when thou comest in and blessed when thou goest out*; Ps. 139:2, 3; Deut. 31:2; 28:19; 1 Sam. 29:6; 2 Sam. 8:25. The picture from which the phraseology is derived is given in Ps. 104:23: **יֵצֵא אָדָם לַפְעֻלָּה וְלַעֲבֹדָה עַד עֶרֶב** *Man goes forth to his work and his labor until the evening*; cf. also Job. 34:21; Ps. 17:5. Most interpreters therefore see in this verse and the one preceding a general blessing on all the activities of life. But the words have also a special application here; to the exiles about to start out on the long march they come with peculiar force: The Lord will ensure your departure from Babylon and your

* The same idea finds expression in the Greek *σεληνιαῖσθαι* (Matt. 4:24; 17:15) as well as in the English phrase *moon-struck*, and the more commonly used Latin derivative *lunatic*.

† Cf. the words of Chrysostom in his note on this verse: *ἐν τοῖς τοῖς ὁ βίος ἄρας, ἐν εἰσόδῳ καὶ ἐξόδῳ.*

safe arrival in Jerusalem; but not only this; he will bring all your undertakings to a happy, successful termination. He will conduct you even to the end of life's pilgrimage.

Notes on Psalm 130.

That the first section (vs. 1-6) is not the cry of a suffering individual, but that these are the words of the congregation is made plain by the address in v. 7; the references are then to the church-nation.* The allusions in the piece are, however, so general as scarcely to admit of determining the definite historical situation; and some commentators have therefore contented themselves with giving simply a general explanation. Others have ventured upon a more exact interpretation.

To Olshausen the song suggests the later times of the Maccabean war; while Hitzig refers the piece to the time when Jonathan had been captured by strategy in Ptolemais, and the people, alarmed at the threatening aspect of affairs, had assembled at Jerusalem where Simon sought to reassure them (cf. 1 Macc. 12:53 to 13:3); the redemption of Jonathan was then the most important question. This special personal reference is altogether unwarranted by the language of the Psalm; and there is nothing in the situation described in the poem that suggests reference of it to the times spoken of in 1 Macc. 12. The piece was clearly composed for the congregation at a time when the conviction of guilt rested heavily on the conscience of the people, and when the need of divine forgiveness was keenly felt. So Wolfson not inaptly supposes that the song was intended to be sung at the time of the evening sacrifice when the offering was made in atonement for the sins of the day; then, interpreting the dawn for which the watchers wait as a figure of release from captivity and Israel as meaning the ten tribes languishing in exile, he considers the piece as a prayer of the Israelites for their return. DeWette thinks these are the words of a Jew in exile, and to Grætz the lament seems to indicate the exilic period. Hengstenberg assigns it to the same period as the other anonymous pilgrim-songs, i. e. to the early years of the Return. The conjecture of Rosenmüller that the Psalm was first sung at the general penitential day (Ezra, cc. 9; 10) cannot be proved. That it may have been used in the public worship on Atonement Day is not improbable in view of its special fitness for such an occasion. It is also quite possible that it was originally composed for use on the day when the community, after a solemn service of confession and prayer, entered into a covenant to keep the law (Neh. 9). But while the definite reference must remain uncertain, the application of the Psalm to the circumstances and conditions of the colony is plain. Like Ps. 126 and 129 it breathes a spirit of hopefulness, of trust and confidence that JHVH will eventu-

*B. Smend, *Ueber das Ich der Psalmen in the Zeitschrift fuer die alttestamentl. Wissenschaft*, VIII., 137.

ally work salvation and remove all causes of distress with all the results of sin.

Ps. 130 belongs to the class of Penitential Psalms of which 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 143, are other prominent examples. It was a favorite with Luther, who termed it, together with 32, 51, 143, *Psalmi Paulini*; "in fact, there appear in Ps. 130 the condemnation of the natural man, free grace, and the spiritual character of redemption in truly Pauline expression" (Delitzsch). Tholuck also recognizes that "the Psalmist promulgates here the true evangelical doctrine of the New Testament, teaching according to Ex. 2:6, 7, that the enduring existence and prosperity of sinful people is only possible through divine forgiveness."

On this Psalm compare especially Professor Haupt's article in *HEBRAICA* II., Jan. 1886, pp. 98 sqq.

(1) The congregation directs its petition to JHVH not "out of the deep abyss of sin" (Geier), but from the deep waves of distress and need which have passed over them in consequence of sins, and in which they are sunken as in waters;* cf. especially Ps. 69 (a Song of the Exile): 2, 3 **הַשְׁעֵנִי אֱלֹהִים כִּי בָאוּ מִים** עד נפש טבעתי בין מצולה ואין מעמד באתי במעמקי מים ושבלת שטפתי *Save me, O God, for waters have come unto my life; I am plunged in deep mire, and there is no standing place; I have entered deep waters and a stream has engulfed me*; also vs. 15, 16; Ps. 124:4, 5; Isa. 51:10; Ezek. 27:34; Ps. 40:3.

Out of the depths I cry; the expression is pregnant, embodying at once a declaration of the suffering by which the congregation is oppressed, and the plea for succor. Our condition is most miserable; wearied and worn with the buffetings of waves of adverse circumstances that threaten our ruin, we turn our eyes to thee, praying for help that will bring our trembling feet to stand on a rock of refuge; cf. Jon. 2:3, 4, 5; Ps. 22:22.

(2) The people realize their weakness and the need of superhuman assistance. *O JHVH! hearken!* i. e., hear and answer favorably; cf. Ps. 120:1 note; 27:7: **שְׁמַע יְהוָה קוֹלִי אֶקְרָא וְחַנּוּנִי רַעֲוֵנִי** *Hear, JHVH, my voice when I cry; and have mercy upon me and answer me. Let thine ears be attentive*; not dull or heavy, so that they cannot hear (Isa. 59:1), but ready to receive the cry of the people; Ps. 34:16: **עֵינֵי יְהוָה אֶל צְדִיקִים וְאָזְנוֹ אֶל שׁוֹעֲתִים** *The eyes of JHVH are toward the righteous and his ears are (open) to their cry*; Ps. 18:6; 28:1, 2; Neh. 1:6, 11.

(3) *If thou shouldst keep in memory men's sins*, i. e. put them to their account, cherish against the offenders the stern purpose of justice and hold them to a strict accountability for their transgressions; or, as Ewald puts it: if thou dost not overlook, condone, forgive. *Who could endure?* Who, then, could stand examination in trial before God, endure the strict scrutiny of his doings and be acquit-

*Rosenm., de Wette, Langer, Hitz., Grætz, Hupf.

ted of guilt? cf. Ps. 1:5; 109:8. The thought is not: who can maintain a stand against the divine vengeance (Langer), or endure the punishment inflicted by God (Clarisse); for there is here no question of the omnipotence of the Judge; cf. Nah. 1:6: **לפני זעמו מי יעמד ומי יקום בחרון אפו חמתו נתכה כאש** *Before his wrath who can stand, and who can endure the heat of his anger; his fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him*; Ps. 76:8; Isa. 57:16. But the point is the universal culpability of mankind; no one can establish his innocence before God's judgment-seat; cf. Ps. 143:2: *But enter not thou into judgment with thy servant*, **כי לא יצדק לפניך** *for before thee no living being can be justified*; Ps. 14:3; 53:4. The main idea of this portion of the Psalm appears in Ezra 9:15: **יהוה אלהי ישראל צדיק אתה כי נשארנו פליטה כהיום הזה הננו לפניך באשמתנו כי אין צדיק אתה כי נשארנו פליטה כהיום הזה הננו לפניך באשמתנו כי אין לעמוד לפניך על זאת** *O JHVH, God of Israel, thou art righteous, for we remain surviving as it is this day; behold we are before thee in our sins, for we cannot stand before thee in regard to this, i. e. God had vindicated his faithfulness by procuring the release of the people from captivity; but they, untaught by past experiences, had again broken the law. God was righteous, but their guilt was established; and convicted by Ezra's preaching, they could only hang their heads in shame and penitence before God, who, should he deal according to the letter of the law, must punish them. The analogies between the ideas in Ezra's prayer (c. 9:5 sqq.) and those of the Psalm are very striking. The congregation, asserting in general terms the sinfulness of man, confesses thereby its own implication in guilt; in this appears the connecting link between the first and second distichs: sin has occasioned the deep floods of distress; hence the appeal for help cannot be based on the ground of merit; if God has regard only to transgressions, then Israel can only plead guilty and is unworthy of his aid.*

(4) This verse has given trouble both in the matter of translation and of explanation. The particle with which it begins, does not, as is frequently the case, introduce a reason for the preceding statement, but rather an antithetic declaration; the counterbalance of forgiving mercy is placed over against the weight of justice in the scales of the divine decision. Hence if this verse is to be connected immediately with v. 3, the particle must be rendered not *for* but *yet*. Similarly in Ps. 22:10 this adversative force appears: here the suffering congregation is represented as pleading with God for deliverance on the grounds of his relation to Israel, and of faith in his power to save which was honored in the past by concessions of the favor desired; but it seems that now God's ear is turned away, the prayer is unanswered, and Israel becomes an object of the ridicule of the foe, who scornfully remarks (22:9): *Let JHVH save them, since he delights in them*, i. e. they claim to be the chosen people, let us see what truth is in their assertion. To this taunt the congregation replies: **כי אתה גר' מבטן מבטח'י**

עַל שְׂרִי אִמִּי *Yet thou art he that brought me forth from the womb ; thou wert my trust upon the breast of my mother.* But an alternative possibility of translation presents itself: the causal conjunction may be taken as indicating the ellipsis of an idea to be supplied in thought: *though my prayer is unanswered, and my enemies mock me, yet my confidence in JHVH is unshaken, for thou art he that brought me forth, etc.*; cf. also Ps. 44:23 ; 87:20 ; Eccl. 5:6. So in the present passage, in opposition to the thought of v. 8, the statement in Ps. 108:10 may be added: **לֹא כַחֲטָאֵינוּ תַעֲשֶׂה לָנוּ וְלֹא כַעֲוֹנֹתֵינוּ תִגְמַל עֲלֵינוּ** *But thou wilt not deal with us according to our sins, nor reward us according to our iniquities.*

To the latter part of the verse the principal difficulty attaches. The Masoretic text may be read in a variety of ways: perhaps most in favor has been the reading: **לְמַעַן תִּירָא** *that thou mayest be feared*,* i. e. as Clarisse puts it, that we may be moved to reverence thee. Should God exercise retributive justice, he will be feared and obeyed as a tyrant, lest he inflict injury; whereas the fact that he deals with mercy provokes pious fear, and wins men to worship him. But if certain punishment has no restraining effect on offenders, then exemption from the penalties of violated statutes will surely not tend to uphold the dignity of the law, nor induce fear of the Law-Giver. Then, too, this is a strange plea in the mouths of offenders; while the long-suffering JHVH might graciously overlook his people's sins and save them with power for the sake of his honor, it would be nothing short of an insult to the Deity for the congregation to come before him with a confession of guilt and the request for forgiveness that they may be moved to revere him.

Some exegetes have sought by emendation to obtain a more satisfactory text. Grætz thinks the passage quite incomprehensible; and comparing the Sexta in Origen's *Hexapla* *ἐνεκεν τοῦ γνωσθῆναι λόγον σου* = **לְמַעַן תִּירָא** *that thy word may be known*, suggests to read **תִּירָא**. Professor P. Haupt, observing Jerome's tradition with regard to the text, i. e. that **תִּירָא** not **תִּירָא** was to be found in the original, conjectured that this word was a rare synonym of **יִרָא** *fear*, and translated: *for the sake of the Religion*.† The sense would then be: "We in our sins are unworthy of thy grace, but do forgive us for the sake of the true Religion revealed by thee of which we are the only though unworthy representatives." In honoring the relation between himself and his people on which that religion is founded, JHVH maintains his glory, re-assures the congregation and shames scoffers at the true faith. This is an intelligible and reasonable explanation, but the emendation is unnecessary,‡ since the same thought may be obtained from the Masoretic text. The word may be read **תִּירָא** *Law*. Grætz's assertion to the contrary notwithstanding, this

* Cf. Wellhausen, *Israelitische u. Juedische Geschichte*, Berlin, 1894, p. 162, note 1.

† HEBRAICA II., Jan. '86, p. 100 n. 5.

‡ Professor Haupt has since abandoned it, as he informed the writer.

gives a most excellent sense. For the *Torah* embodies not only statutes and precepts, but promises and covenants, and while the congregation could not base the petition on an appeal to the fulfillment of ordinances, but must confess guilt, yet it could justly entreat God to vindicate his promise of forgiveness and restoration to favor on condition of repentance and turning unto him. On the one hand punishment is the due recompense of violated law; on the other, the people acknowledge their ill-desert, and in justice to the covenant of mercy God will grant pardon. This thought finds expression frequently in the Old Testament; thus in Deut. 30:1 sqq. closely succeeding the recital of the woes consequent upon disobedience comes the promise of the blessings to be showered upon the repentant; cf. Lev. 26:40 sqq.; Zech. 1:3; 2 Chron. 6:24, 25, 36 sqq. Especially prominent did the covenant relation become in the exilic and post-exilic times, when with earnest longing Israel looked for the day of redemption and restoration.

With thee is forgiveness; cf. Neh. 9:17; **אתה אלוה סליחות** *Thou art a God of pardons*. Tender mercy constitutes quite as important a feature of God's dealing with man as does his justice.*

Luther's beautiful penitential hymn, which closely paraphrases this Psalm, begins with the words: *Aus tiefer Noth schrei ich zu Dir*. He seems to have taken as the principal idea the thought of the second pair of verses, that God will deal in mercy, and therefore makes the Psalm a promulgation of the evangelical doctrine of justification by free grace, and an exhortation to trust in it and not on personal merit. But as connection and analogy show (cf. vs. 4 and 8), the forgiveness of sins implies here especially the removal of the temporal consequences of sin, of the distresses accruing from iniquities. Forgiveness precedes salvation, but the latter is the sign confirming the bestowal of the former. If the congregation continues to suffer, there is no assurance that the petition has been heard. Hence even after the Return, a wonderful pledge of JHVH'S favor, the colonists, depressed by the failure of their hopes, could attribute their misery only to the fact that JHVH'S face was still turned away in anger, and hence they cry: how long ere we shall be restored to favor and prosperity; cf. Ps. 85:6, 7, 8; 126:4.

(5) We have been and are still earnestly expecting a favorable response to the prayer. With a yearning deepened and intensified by past disappointments, Israel † waits still for the boon which God alone can bestow. Events that still live in memory have proved the truth of Jeremiah's words (c. 3:23): *Truly in JHVH our God is the salvation of Israel*. And though the reward of faith is slow to appear, Israel waits for JHVH'S coming in might to save; cf. Isa. 8:17:

* Cf. Dan. 9:9: **לאדני אלהינו הרחמים והסליחות כי מרדנו בו** *To the Lord, our God, belong mercies and forgivenesses though we have rebelled against him*.

† Olshausen's idea that the priests here make reply to the congregation is unwarranted by the language.

חֲכִיתִי לִיהוָה הַמַּסְתִּיר פָּנָיו מִבֵּית יַעֲקֹב וְקִוִּיתִי לוֹ *And I will wait for JHVH, who hides his face from the house of Jacob, and will hope for him.*

His word, the announcement of pardon, the divine fiat that abolishes the reign of sin and suffering and inaugurates the coming of blessings so long desired; or in other words, the verification of promises, the proof in deeds that God's word never fails. Ewald defines it as "the word of salvation and redemption." As commentators have generally recognized, it is the word of promise that forms the basis of hope, and its accomplishment the object looked for; cf. Ps. 119:25, 28, 42, 74, 41, 49, etc.

(6) By a forceful comparison the poet seeks to depict in a yet more striking way the intensity of expectation and longing which he has emphasized by repetition of the thought in parallel phrases. By some the watchers are supposed to be the priests watching in the temple for the coming of the dawn when they will summon their companions to assist in offering the morning sacrifice * (so Clarisse). Wolfson thinks of the Levites upon whom devolved the duties of watching in the temple and of opening it every morning; cf. 1 Chron. 9:27. Others think of attendants at the bedside of the sick. It seems, however, more reasonable and more in keeping with the idea of intent expectation of a joyful hour to come to consider that the poet had no special class of watchmen in mind, but meant in general those who after a night's vigil (or perhaps the detail of men who keep the morning watch)† await with eager impatience the break of dawn which will bring them relief from the exhausting strain and anxiety imposed on them by their responsible office. The point of comparison is the extremity of desire; as the tired sentinel looks toward the east to catch the first rosy tints that betoken the dawn, so Israel looks to discover the first manifestations of JHVH'S coming.

(7) The repetition of the phrase has given rise to some difficulty, and occasioned the erroneous translations to be found in the Ancient Versions. It is explained by Clarisse as a device to gain the attention of the audience, or as due to the metre, or made for poetic effect (so Rosenm.). Some translators have entirely omitted the significant repetition; thus Bickell: *Ich hoff' auf Gott, auf sein Wort | Harrt meine Seele. | Mehr als auf Fruehrot Waechter, | Harr', Israel,*

* Cf. the Mishnic Tract Joma, 8, 1.

† On the night-watches cf. F. Delitzsch, *Assyriologischen Notizen zum Alten Testament*, No. III. in the *Zeitsch. fuer Keltischforschung*, II, July, 1886. The New Testament distinguishes four night-watches (cf. Matt. 14:25; Mark 6:48), denoted by *δύε, μεσονύκτιον, ἡλεκτροφωρία* and *πρωί* (Mark 13:35), a division derived from the Romans. In the Old Testament, the night is divided into three watches: *ראש אשמורת* the beginning of the watches, Lam. 2:19; *האשמורת* the middle watch, Judg. 7:19; *אשמורת הבקר* the morning watch, Ex. 14:24. The same division obtained among the Assyro-Babylonians; cf. III R. 52, 57 b; IV R. 56, 80; II R. 11-13 e, f: *maçartu barâritum*, so named because held when twilight was succeeded by the glory of the stars (cf. Neh. 4:15, in A. V. 4:21); *maçartu qablîtu*=middle watch; *maçartu šadduru* (for *šadurru*)=watch of the breaking of the dawn.

Sein | . So also J. D. Michaelis : * *Meine Begierde sieht nach dem Herrn aus, | mehr als einer, der zur Nachtzeit reiset, auf den Morgen wartet. | Israel hoffe auf Jehova* | ; and so also E. Meier †.

De Wette considers that this is merely a repetition in the spirit of the degree-like rhythm, while Olshausen thinks it has significance only for the external form of the recitation, and Grætz would explain it as an antiphony of the chorus. Hengstenberg attributes it to the earnest longing which loves repetition ; and Delitzsch supposes that by this means the poet sought to give the idea of long protracted watching. The Ancient Versions also failed to find the point.

P. Haupt was the first to perceive that "the words with a delicate turn of the figure are used as accosting the congregation," ‡ and belong not in v. 6, where the Masorites by incorrect division of the original text have placed them, but as the hortatory introduction to the address which begins in v. 7. The priest, seizing the last expression used by the congregation, applies it to his auditors as a phrase most apt and fitting, a description clear and terse of Israel's present condition. Your comparison, says he, is just ; for indeed you are watching for the morning ; in the dark night of sin and sin's consequences you grope, your vision is strained to discover the morning glow of divine grace that will usher in the day of redemption. Darkness and night represent calamity ; cf. Deut. 28:29 : *והיית ממשש בצהרים כאשר ימשש העור באפלה ולא תצליח את דרכיך* and *thou wilt grope at noon-day as the blind gropes in darkness, and thou wilt not prosper in thy ways* ; Ps. 88:7, 8 ; 107:10 ; Isa. 42:7. Light, on the contrary, is the symbol of prosperity and happiness ; cf. Isa. 60:20 : *Thy sun will no more go down, nor will thy moon withdraw*, *כי יהוה יהיה לך לאור עולם ושלמו ימי אבלך*, for *JHVH will be thine everlasting light and the days of thy mourning will be over* ; Isa. 58:8 ; 9:1 (cf. Matt. 4:16) ; Mal. 3:10. In a similar strain the priest speaks here : *In the evening weeping turned in to pass the night with you, but in the morning glad joy will come* (Ps. 30:6 : *בערב ילין בכי ולבקר רנה*). Though that fair dawn be slow to break, yet wait, Israel, for JHVH ! Let neither your distress nor your impatience cause you to doubt for one moment God's faithfulness ; neither let your sinfulness cause you to think he will not have mercy on you. *For with JHVH is grace, and with him is redemption in abundance* ; Ps. 103:11.

(8) And as he redeemed Israel from captivity, so now he, HE (the pronoun is emphatic) will deliver his people from all their iniquities. These sins embrace also the consequences they have entailed ; cf. Ps. 35:11 : *כי כלו ביגון חיי* *משנותי באנחה כשל בעוני כחי ועצמי שששו*. *For my life is spent with*

* *Deutsche Uebersetzung des Alten Testaments*, Part VI., 2 ed. Göttingen, 1782, p. 206 ; but in his notes, p. 276, he gives the correct translation.

† *Die poetischen Bücher des Alten Testaments*, Part II, *Die Psalmen*, Stuttgart, 1850, p. 154.

‡ Cf. *HEBRAICA*, II., pp. 99, 101, 104 ; and I. M. Casanowicz, *Paronomasia in the Old Testament*, Boston, 1894, p. 88, No. 484.

grief and my years with sighing; by reason of my iniquity my strength fails and my bones waste away; Ps. 40:13; 88:5, 6. The forgiving love that puts away transgressions from the remembrance of the Judge will accomplish the removal of all woe; Isa. 48:25; Ps. 103:3, 4, 5. Let Israel, therefore, wait in calm reliance upon the sure promise of JHVH; cf. Isa. 50:10: מִי בָכֶם יִרְאֵה יְהוָה שָׁמַע בְּקוֹל עַבְדּוֹ אֲשֶׁר הָלַךְ חֲשֵׁכִים וְאֵין נֶגֶח לּוֹ יִבְטַח בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה וְיִשְׁעֵן בְּאֱלֹהָיו Who among you is fearing JHVH, listening to the voice of his servant? He that walks in darkness, without a ray of light—let him trust in the name of JHVH and support himself on his God.

Very apt seems the conjecture of Paul Haupt that the final verse of Ps. 131, which is there out of place, and has no connection with what precedes, belongs properly to Ps. 130. That Ps. 132 already, in the time of the Chronicler, was placed near 130 is shown by 2 Chron. 6:40–42. Accordingly we may safely assume that Ps. 131 followed 130 at that time, and there is no difficulty in supposing that, even at that early period, the end of Ps. 130 was added to the fragment Ps. 131:1, 2 in order to give it a proper conclusion.* At all events, the fitness of the verse as the closing exhortation of the priest's address is apparent. You, says he, have waited long, are waiting still; this is the proper attitude, for your light will come. And not only in this present instance do I counsel hope and trust in JHVH, but also in all future cases rely upon him and you will not be disappointed.

Notes on Ps. 123.

The similarity between the opening of this Psalm and that of Ps. 121 need by no means indicate, as Hengstenberg thought, unity of authorship. As remarked by Cheyne,† the points of similarity with Ps. 120 are much more marked. They are both "distinctively persecution psalms" and contain a "record of deepening misery among malicious neighbors." Like Ps. 120, this piece seems to refer to the unfriendly disposition of the peoples in Palestine toward the new colony. In the former piece, the Jews arraign these hostile neighbors before the bar of God for slander; in this one, feeling keenly the disgrace of their national calamity that had made them a by-word among the nations, they pray for deliverance from the cruel shafts of contemptuous scorn aimed at them by these unsympathizing persons. Whether the reference is to the general feeling toward the Jews or to some special manifestation of spite, it is difficult to say. But the piece may be placed in the period before the arrival of Nehemiah, when the unfortunate colonists, as we learn from Neh. 1:3, were subject to ridicule and heartless contempt.

(1) After the destruction of the temple, where God manifested himself and where many among the congregation supposed that he actually dwelt, the name

* Cf. HEBRAICA, II., p. 106.

† *Origin of the Psalter*, p. 55.

of JHVH as the God of heaven came into particular use, differentiating him from the heathen vanities while answering the slur cast upon his very existence by the question of the heathen*: *Where is your God?* cf. Ps. 115:3, 4; Ezra, 5:11, 12; 6:9; 7:23; Neh. 1:4; 2:4. The proof of JHVH's non-existence or of his weakness was not involved in the ruin of his earthly house; for his throne is in heaven; cf. Ps. 11, 4: **בהיכל קדשו יהוה בשמים כסאו** *JHVH is in his holy temple; his throne is in heaven*; Ps. 103:19; 102:20; 2:4.

In the name of the distressed congregation, the poet raises his voice in prayer. Human assistance is lacking and would be of no avail; JHVH is the only saving helper, and he is ready to give aid; cf. Ps. 20:7.

(2) Several explanations are offered: (a) some think that just as servants who, when they suffer violence at the hands of others, have no other recourse than to apply to their master or mistress for defence and the punishment of the offender, so the congregation of Israel, oppressed by powerful enemies, takes refuge in the help of JHVH (Venema, J. D. Michaelis); (b) just as servants are attentive to their masters in expectation of gifts or favors, or even the necessities of life, so Israel looks to the liberal hands of God for kindnesses and blessings (de Wette, Hupf., Kamph., Olsh.); (c) others think of servants undergoing punishment, eagerly watching the hand of their lord for the sign that the castigation shall cease (Rosenm., J. Qamchi, Langer, Hgstb., Bæth);—(d) while yet others have in mind the close attention of slaves to catch the slightest indication of their master's wishes (Hitz., Grætz, Del., Thol.). No one of these explanations seems to yield a satisfactory interpretation of the passage.

It appears that the verse sets forth the relation between JHVH and Israel. In brief, it is an epitome of the Jewish idea of religion. The *tertium comparationis* lies in the obedience, faithfulness and allegiance of the servants to their master. An obedient servant has the right to expect kind, considerate treatment from his lord, and if abused would be justified in leaving his service; cf. Gen. 16:6-9. The tone of the Psalm may appear strange to Christian readers, but it is in keeping with the Jewish conception of religion. JHVH and Israel were parties to a contract, and the terms of agreement were these: protection and prosperity bestowed by God in return for constant, faithful observance of his laws by his people, while, on the other hand, disregard of the divine ordinances entails punishment upon the offenders; cf. Deut. 11:26-28; 28; 29:9-12; 30:1-3. Frequently in the Psalms appeals for help and deliverance are based on the ground of service and obedience; Ps. 86:2: **שמרה נפשי כי חסיד אני הרשע עברך אתה** *Preserve my soul, for I am pious; O thou my God, save thy servant who trusts in thee*; Ps. 31:2; 86:16; 79:10.

* Cf. Cheyne, *Origin of the Psalter*, p. 314.

Israel pleads the terms of the covenant* that JHVH has apparently violated by permitting his faithful servants to suffer under the contempt of their enemies. The people declare their fidelity, humility and utter dependence on God; he is their Master, they his chosen people; † they wait in anxious suspense for the slightest indication of his purpose to help them. Willing to do anything even if they do not get out of their difficulties, yet they hope for and expect deliverance as the reward of their unfaltering allegiance. But it seems now as though JHVH were unmindful of his covenant and careless of their misery.

The hand is the symbol of power and authority; by its gestures the master makes known his will. To lift up the eyes to the master's hand is to be attentive to his commands, to acknowledge his authority; it is the attitude of submission and obedience.

(3) The Masoretic text reads: **כִּי רַב שְׁבַעְנוּ בָּח** *For we are but too full of contempt* (Cheyne), i. e., we have been compelled to swallow so many insults that we are filled to repletion with them; cf. Ps. 88:4: **כִּי שְׁבַעָה בְרָעוֹת נַפְשִׁי** *For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to the pit*; Job 9:18; Sam. 3:15. But the reading of the Syriac versions seems preferable here; the change is very slight, and the sense of the passage remains unaltered.

The poet, having shown upon what grounds Israel lays claim to the protection of JHVH, declares that this is a time of distress and need, when JHVH, faithful to his promise, should bring deliverance. *Remember, JHVH, the reproach of thy servants, and, for thy mercies' sake, save us from our enemies, who heap upon us cruel insults; though thou hast made us a by-word among the heathen, yet we have not forgotten thee, nor have we dealt falsely in thy covenant*; cf. Ps. 44:13 sqq.

For the allusions in the passage cf. Neh. 1:3: *And they said to me, the remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province* **בְּרַעָה גְרִלָּה וְחִרְפָּה** *are in great affliction and reproach*; also Neh. 2:17-19.

(4) The more general expression in v. 3 would fit past or present experiences equally well; but here the defining adjectives give clearer indication of the reference. De Wette justly concludes that the epithets do not suit the Samaritans, for they too were Persian subjects, though in more fortunate circumstances than their Jewish neighbors. Olshausen recognizes that the verse speaks of heathen oppressors. In reference as in form the passage seems to be similar to 120:6 (q. v). A glance is afforded into the gloomy period of the Exile; overbearing and proud were appropriate epithets to describe the Chaldeans; cf. Isa. 13:11-19: *I will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity*; **וְהַשְׁבַּתִּי גֵּאוֹן זָדִים** *and I will humble the pride of the wicked*; **וְנָאוֹת עֲרִיצִים אֲשַׁפֵּל וְהִיתָה בָּבֶל צִבִּי מִמְּלֻכּוֹת תִּפְאָרֶת גֵּאוֹן כְּשָׂרִים** *and I will overthrow the towers of the mighty, and the towers of the proud shall be brought down, and the towers of the proud shall be brought down*.

* Cf. Ps. 44:18-21; 89:40.

† Cf. especially Mal. 1:6.

כמהפכת אלהים את סדם זאת עמרה *I will cause the arrogance of the proud to cease and the haughtiness of the fierce I will lay low; and Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the pride of the Chaldeans, will be ruined as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah; cf. Isa. 14:4 sqq.; Jer. 50:29, 31 sqq.; 51:41; Ezek. 31:1-18.*

Long enough did the people suffer shame during the Captivity; but now even in the land of their fathers reproach is heaped upon them.

Notes on Ps. 122.

The title in the Hebrew text has suggested the possibility that David wrote this strong poem. But the idea is at once excluded by the reference to Jerusalem as the former seat of civil government, the capital of David's dynasty, and as a religious center whither the tribes were wont to resort, as well as by the allusion to the temple.

According to the popular view, the Psalm is a pilgrim-song: in it the pilgrims, at length arrived at the gates, pour forth their admiration of the city; or else, as Delitzsch thought, the author, on his way home, recounts the events of his journey from the first summons to go up to Jerusalem. This seems to explain to some extent the language of the opening verses; but does not account for the latter half of the song, from which it would appear that the author is a citizen of Jerusalem and profoundly interested in all that pertains to her welfare.

There is nothing to justify the idea of Wolfson, who thinks that the Israelites in captivity express their intense longing for the temple; on the contrary, everything seems to indicate that the privileges of worship are free to those spoken of in the Psalm, and it is clear that the population of Jerusalem is addressed in v. 6.

The chief features in the situation are these: the people are in Jerusalem; public worship in the temple is now possible, and the city has been rebuilt; but the picture has also a dark side; the earnest prayer for peace and harmony and the exhortation to promote the welfare of the city show that discord and selfishness have been causing trouble. The close correspondence between the situation thus described and that in Jerusalem at the time when Nehemiah was rebuilding the walls is at once evident.* On the one side stood the brave governor with those men who remained true to their obligations as citizens and Jews; on the other were the parties whom the work of reconstruction and reform had displeased, whose schemes to better their private fortunes conflicted with the best

* Hitzig finds a place for the Psalm in the Maccabean period, at the time (141 B. C.) when Simon repaired the walls (cf. 1 Macc. 13:10). Certain of the conditions in the historical situation are thus met; but, as Grætz remarks, the reference in v. 2 seems to point to a time shortly after the Exile.

interests of the city. A special occasion for the Psalm may be found in the distress consequent upon the extortion of interest from the poorer Jews, whom circumstances had compelled to borrow from their richer brethren; the idea is favored by the similarity in tone between the Psalm and the speech of Nehemiah (cf. c. 5). The piece is in any case an address to the people, to the disaffected elements in particular, urging them to promote the public prosperity and promising that personal blessings will thus be secured.

The argument of the poem is developed in a thoroughly artistic and very effective way: mention of the causes for rejoicing in the present state of affairs, coupled with reminiscences of the past glory of the city, naturally leads up to the exhortation and prayer that peace and prosperity may be perpetuated; a fitting climax and powerful conclusion is then reached in the individual resolve of the writer, who swayed by forcible considerations, sets a good example to his fellow-citizens.

(1) The quotation has generally been taken as the resolve or summons of the pilgrims to set out for Jerusalem. But as recognized by Grätz and Hengstenberg, נלך *let us go* does not give this sense, which would be expressed by נעלה *let us go up*. So Hengstenberg supposes that the pilgrims, having arrived at the city, are now stopping at the gates in order that the festive procession may be set in order for the march to the temple; an ingenious idea certainly.

Translated into ordinary English the second hemistich will read: *let us go to church*; cf. Eccl. 4:17: שֹׁמֵר רִגְלָךְ כְּאִשֶּׁר תֵּלֵךְ אֶל בֵּית הָאֱלֹהִים *Restrain thy foot as thou goest to the temple*. The returned exiles rejoice in the restoration of the privileges of public worship; these had been denied them during the Exile; but now the temple had been rebuilt and the services begun afresh; thither the worshipers now go to pray and to make offerings.

(2) Those commentators who take v. 1^b as the summons to go on pilgrimage, see in this verse the arrival at the gates of the city; the poet, following the travelers with his mind's eye, is "already in spirit at Jerusalem" (de Wette); so Cheyne renders: *our feet stand at last within thy gates*.* But with this verse ends everything that might suggest that the present situation has anything to do with a feast-journey; the verses that follow, especially 6-9, show that the occasion is of a different nature.

We are indeed in Jerusalem. The author seeks to impress upon the minds of the people an adequate idea of the magnitude of the blessings which God has conferred upon them, to arouse within them feelings of joy, thankfulness and love, and so to prepare the way for the exhortation to follow. We are again permitted to worship JHVH in his house, for we are indeed back in Jerusalem, the city of

*Olshausen, however, gives the following paraphrase: *etnet betreten wir deine Strassen und Plätze*.

David, whose very stones and dust are dear to us.* How abundant are the causes for thankfulness.

The gates are specially mentioned because they were the centers of public life, the places of business, 2 Kgs. 7:1; also the courts were held there; cf. Amos 5:12; Zech. 8:16; Deut. 25:7; 21:19; Isa. 29:21; there, too, news and gossip were circulated; Ps. 69:13: *ישיחו בי ישבי שער ונגינות שותי שכר* *They that sit in the gate speak against me, and I am the song of drunkards*; Prov. 31:23, 31; the plural *gates* is used in metonymy of the city itself (cf. Deut. 17:2; 12:15; 14:21, 27, 29) just as the *feet* refer to the persons, so that the notion of literally standing in the gates cannot be maintained.

(3) According to the received Hebrew text the translation is usually given: *Jerusalem that is built up as a city that is compact together*. As to the first hemistich there can be no dispute except concerning the meaning of *בנייה*. Some (de Wette, Schultz) take the word in an emphatic sense: *well built*; or else it is said that the principal thought lies in *as a city* (so Grätz), and the verse is supposed to express the astonishment and wonder of a peasant on beholding the great city, with the long rows of houses closely joined together, in striking contrast to the hamlets of the country districts, composed of scattered cottages with wide spaces between them (Chrysostom, Rosenm., de Wette, Thol.). That a city is built need not be said; and hence if such stress is laid here on the fact that Jerusalem now looks as a city should, it can only mean that the place has been rebuilt. In antiquity a city became such in the full sense of the word only when it had been girded with protecting walls.

In the second hemistich the meaning of the words found in the received text is perfectly plain: *where assembled together*; but the subject of the verb is lacking. A subject, however, of the character suggested by the context, is readily obtained from v. 4, where the expression *עדות לישראל* *an ordinance for Israel* is obscure and out of place and should be changed in accordance with the rendering of the Greek translator Symmachus to read *עדת לישראל* *the congregation of Israel*, and then transferred to this verse.† The sense now becomes perfectly clear: Jerusalem is rebuilt, has arisen from the ruins, so that she now sits in the dignity of a city, the center of a people, where the congregation of Israel assembles for worship as in former years.

The poet advances a step further in his argument: not only are we back in Jerusalem, but the city in which we take pride no longer presents the sad spectacle of heaps of ruins, battered walls and burned gates. The heathen can no longer point the finger of scorn at us, for Jerusalem is rebuilt.

* Cf. Ps. 102:15: *עפרה ואמת יחזנו* *For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and her dust they look upon with sadness.*

† Cf. Prof. Haupt's restoration of the text in *HEBRAICA*, II., Jan. 1886, p. 90, note 5.

(4) The phrase **עדות לישראל** variously rendered as: (*according to*) a law, (*custom, statute*) for Israel, or a *testimony for Israel*,—can have no place in this verse. It has been explained as referring to the ordinance in obedience to which the tribes went up to Jerusalem; cf. Ex. 23:17: **שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים בַּשָּׁנָה יֵרָאֶה יְהוָה כָּל זָכוֹר אֶל פְּנֵי הָאֵל** *Thrice in a year shall all thy males appear before Lord JHVH*: Ex. 34:23; Deut. 16:16.

The tribes of Jah constitute the spiritual Israel, the congregation of JHVH; cf. Deut. 32:9: **כִּי חֵלֶק יְהוָה עָמּוֹ** “*For JHVH's portion is his people*,” Ps. 74:2; Isa. 63:17. The expression contains a reference to the relation between JHVH and Israel; cf. note on 124:1.

The three great annual feasts may perhaps be primarily alluded to here; Deut. 16:16: *Thrice a year shall all thy males appear before thy God in the place he chooses, בחג המצות ובחג השבועות ובחג הסוכות at the feast of unleavened bread, the feast of weeks and feast of booths.* But the point in the verse is of a more general nature; Jerusalem is declared to have been the religious center of the people, the seat of the national religion.

(5) The city was also the seat of government, the civil and political center.

To the king appertained the right to sit in judgment (1 Sam. 8:5; 1 Kgs. 7:7; Isa. 16:5; 32:1; 28:6), though he might also depute an officer to hear cases (2 Sam. 15:2, 3). This power of administering justice stands only as a representative function of the government* which is referred to as a whole by this mention of one of its more important prerogatives.

By these allusions to the glorious past the poet touches those feelings most potent to arouse his auditors to the desired action. He congratulates the people on their present blessings and expresses the gratitude they must have. Their situation in the theater of the actions of bygone years awakens memories of the nation's former greatness and the height of power, splendor and influence Jerusalem attained in the reign of the warrior David and his successors. He thus appeals to national and religious pride.

(6) A most excellent commentary on this verse is contained in the advice of Jeremiah to the captives in Babylon, c. 29:7: **וִרְדּוּ אֶת שְׁלוֹם הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר יִגְלִיתִי אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה וְהִתְפַּלְלוּ בַּעֲרֵהָ אֶל יְהוָה כִּי בְשָׁלוֹמָה יִהְיֶה לָכֶם שְׁלוֹם** *And seek the peace† of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captive, and pray to JHVH in her behalf; for in her peace you will have peace.*

In this and the following verse the point of the whole Psalm is reached and clearly set forth: an attempt to promote prosperity and unity; an appeal to the citizens to seek with hearty, whole-souled endeavors the welfare of the city. The natural inference is that discord and strife had previously reigned and had produced disastrous results. The exhortation is backed by the strongest arguments

* Hitzig sees here an allusion to the Sanhedrim.

† I. e. identify yourself with the interests of.

that the writer could possibly find. I appeal to you in the name of all you hold pleasant, dear and sacred, unite your hearts and voices in fervent petition for the peace of our city, restored to us from her desolation; they alone who manifest love for thee, O Jerusalem, may expect to be prospered; abundant blessings will reward pursuance of work for the city's interest.

(7) The apostrophe of the city is simply a poetic way of addressing the people; cf. Jer. 4:14; 6:8; 13:27; 15:5.

Some think that by *חיל*, properly *circuit*, the space in front of the walls is meant; so Rosenmüller takes the idea to be that the city will be at peace with the nations, so that there will be no need of an army to protect her; at the same time peace is to reign within, for the *palaces* are put for the whole city, as in Ps. 48:4: *אלהים בארמנותיה נודע למשגב* *God is known in her palaces as a refuge*. But the Psalm is directed to the solution of internal dissensions and the consequent troubles in the city; and the reference in *בחילך* is rather to the city as enclosed within encircling walls, while by the *palaces* the public buildings, temple and houses in general are meant; the two words are put in parallelism, as also in Ps. 48:14: *שיתו לכם לחילה פסגו ארמנותיה* *Mark you well her walls; consider her palaces*. The verse is, in form and language, parallel to v. 6. The prosperity of the city is conditioned upon the harmonious thought and action of the citizens; peace and prosperity can reign only as co-regents; for the entrance of internecine strife overthrows the state.

(8) In view of all this, says the poet, I will use my power to promote the welfare of the city, that my co-religionists, men endeared to me by social, civil and religious relations, may be benefitted; cf. the parallel portions of Nehemiah's speech to the usurers, c. 5:5, 7, 8, 10.

(9) With this the climax in persuasive argument is reached. Here is brought forward the highest motive which, above all others, should prompt the believing Jew to do what the poet urges. The occasion is one which demands the display, not only of patriotism and fraternal feeling, but of devotion to the true religion. He, then, who refuses to do what the writer so clearly shows to be his duty, proves himself void of fidelity to the city, his fellow-men and his God.

Notes on Ps. 127.

This poem has presented difficulties to some who have sought to interpret it according to the demands of their peculiar theories. With the feast-journeys it has nothing to do. Wolfson finds scanty allusion to the times of Hezekiah, and is obliged to explain it as written "concerning Solomon." Some (de Wette, Hitz., Hupf., Olsh.) consider the piece as altogether general in nature, without special reference to any historical event. The unity of the Song has been doubted, since the connection between the stanzas has been missed. Rosenmüller is disposed to consider it as a fragment of a longer Psalm.

The heading **לשלמה** has been taken: (1) as indicating the author (so Clarisse, Hgstb., Thol.). In support of this, it is urged that the sentiments of the Psalm are very similar to those in Ecclesiastes and Proverbs, works by tradition ascribed to Solomon, and that the argument of the piece seems to point to the golden age of the kingdom as the period of composition; besides, Solomon bore the title **יְדִידָה** *beloved*, 2 Sam. 12:25. But the proverb-like form of verse appears elsewhere in the Psalter; e. g. Pss. 1, 112, 128; and by what a time of great national prosperity is indicated in the Psalm, is not clear.—(2) The title may also mean: “for Solomon”; and some think the piece was written by David as a prescription to his son of the manner in which the temple was to be built, or perhaps to give principles of action on the lines of which the affairs of the kingdom were to be administered. Others, again, see in these vigorous verses a rebuke to Solomon as the author of Ecclesiastes, to whose teachings many took exceptions; cf. Eccl. 2:21, 23; 4:6–8; 5:11, 16, with 127:2. The Psalm supplies the answer to the question propounded in Ecclesiastes, and thus gives a good lesson for Solomon.

The superscription (which occurs in the Targum, Aquila, Symmachus and St. Jerome) does not endure the strict examination of textual criticism: it is omitted in the LXX. (except in some MSS.) as well as in Theodoret. It owes its origin to the superficial interpretation of the scribes, to whom mention of the house suggested the temple; this seeming allusion to Solomon was then confirmed by **יְדִידָה** *his beloved* and **שָׁנָא** *in sleep*, in view of such passages as 2 Sam. 12:25 and 1 Kgs. 3:5–14.

Some commentators seek to find the point of union between the two seemingly unconnected portions of the piece in the general conception which Delitzsch prefixes as the title of the Song, that on God's blessing everything depends (*an Gottes Segen alles gelegen*), the begetting and rearing of children being a special instance of the fact (so Ewald, Hupf., Olsh., Cheyne *et al.*), chosen perhaps because of the great importance attached to the acquisition of sons. In this way the force of the Psalm is obscured in comparatively meaningless generalities, and the adversative element in the second stanza is utterly lost. The connecting link lies rather in the stem **בָּנָה**, whose double use, of *building in the material sense* and of *building up a family*,* is well known, and it is precisely these two ideas that are brought into juxtaposition in the Psalm. Over against the work of rearing houses, the Psalmist places the rearing of sons; against the provisions of defence for the city is set the idea of protection, to be secured by the multiplication of the inhabitants (v. 5); in antithesis to the notion of restless labor is put the statement that JHVH'S beloved obtain the same results, by the divine blessing, even in sleep. It is true that the words of v. 1, if disconnected from the

*Cf. Prof. Haupt's paper, *Batim lo benuyim*, *Johns Hopkins University Circulars*, July, 1894.

Song, might be taken as referring simply to those who undertake the important works mentioned, without seeking divine assistance and approval (Hengstenberg); but v. 2^c will not admit of this. Quiet confidence in the power of God, attention to the development of the family as the hope of the city, the duty of marriage in the time of youthful vigor,—these are the points of the Song. The opening verse is, to all appearances, general in nature; but at the head of v. 2 stands the indication of special reference in the direct address to the party whose actions incur condemnation. In clear lines the picture is drawn, the original of which in post-exilic times, to which many exegetes assign the poem, it is not difficult to discover. With exact detail is reproduced the description given in Nehemiah's *Memoirs* of his assiduous labor in rebuilding the walls (c. 4:15-17). Moreover, the praise accorded him who rears a large family, seems to imply a corresponding reproach for those who were childless; and this indirect rebuke, as well as the open condemnation in v. 2, appears to be especially directed against Nehemiah himself, who was chiefly responsible for the work, and who was, in all probability, a eunuch. The credit of discovering this reference belongs to Grætz.

The piece originated most likely in the party, composed largely of priests and nobles, who because of their more liberal views in civil and religious matters, and because of their alliances by marriage with the surrounding non-Jewish peoples, were opposed to the orthodox Nehemiah, whose uncompromising exclusivism and determined zeal in carrying out his scheme for the protection of Jerusalem provoked their anger. Many thought all this extraordinary activity misdirected and unnecessary, and considered that the chief good was an increase in the population which, as in the time of Zechariah (c. 2:1-5; 8:4 sq.), was small. This gave occasion to condemn the marriage reform instituted by Ezra, as well as opportunity to taunt the governor with his physical deficiency. Nehemiah appears as a man actuated by religious motives; yet his application of practical means to secure his ends laid him open to the charge that he was not a God-fearing man, since as such he would not have availed himself of worldly instrumentalities (Grætz). But was Nehemiah a eunuch? The words of Isa. 56:3-5 plainly show that there must have been among the congregation in Exile orthodox Jews who, if the law in Deut. 23:1 was enforced, would have been placed under the ban of excommunication as eunuchs. The statement in Dan. 1:3 sqq. that comely children of the Jewish captives were selected to be prepared and instructed under the charge of the chief eunuch for the King's service is probably correct. Eunuchs were a regular appurtenance of royal households in Oriental countries (cf. Gen. 39:1; 1 Kgs. 22:9; 2 Kgs. 9:32; 23:11; Jer. 34:19; Isa. 39:7; Est. 1:10, 12, 15), their especial function being the care of the harem (cf. Est. 2:3, 14, 15), though other matters were also entrusted to them (Jer. 38:7), and their station might be very high, as was that of the Ethiopian treasurer of Queen Candace (Acts 8:27; cf. Gen. 39:1; 2 Kgs. 18:17). So, if Nehemiah had been a

eunuch there would have been nothing strange in granting to him authority as governor in Jerusalem. Indirect testimony showing that he was a eunuch is given in Neh. 2:8, where, speaking of his interview with the king, Nehemiah mentions that the queen was also present. It must be remembered that the queen was jealously guarded from the gaze of men; so that Vashti was acting in a becoming manner and in accord with custom when she refused to obey the command of her drunken lord (Est. 1:10 sqq.). Concubines, to be sure, were allowed to be present at banquets (Dan. 5:2 sq.), but the queen proper, the שֶׁנֶל, never.* The eunuchs, by reason of their peculiar connection with the royal household, were brought into closer relation to the king and his family: it was the eunuch's business to wait on the monarch and his women; and in this position Nehemiah was serving.

(1) The house to the Jews in later times suggested the temple, which is more properly designated *בית יהוה* house of JHVH, Ps. 122:1, 9; 134:1; 23:8; 27:4; 92:14; or *בית האלהים* the house of God, Ps. 42:5; 52:10; 84:11. By metonymy the term also means family; Ex. 1:21: *Because the midwives feared God יעש להם בתים* he made houses for them,† i.e., built up their families; Deut. 25:9; Ruth 4:11. Not only the combination of *house* and *city*, but also the opposition between the two stanzas of the Psalm shows that the literal sense is intended here, viz., the material building; but besides this, there inheres in the expression the side notion of rearing a family, and, in continuation of this idea, mention of defence for the city suggests protection of the purity and virtue of the home and all the family interests.

The *watchers* are the regular watchmen of the city, whether guards on the walls, or "policemen" patrolling the streets; cf. Cant. 3:3: *מצאני השמרים* הסנבים בעיר The watchmen that go about the city found me; Cant. 5:7; Isa. 62:6: *על חומתיך ירושלם הפקדתי שמרים* I have put watchmen on thy walls, O Jerusalem; cf. Ps. 130:6. The poet has in mind those who labor as if everything depended on their personal efforts and on physical energy, instead of seeking the help of God as the one all-important means‡ to the accomplishment of the desired end. These pious remarks set forth clearly the principle to be followed, and, however general they may be, contain a sharp allusion to the present affairs.

(2) The poet now quits his proverb-like utterance and passes, with a brief word of personal reference put in the place of emphasis at the beginning, into

* Queen-consorts seem to have been able to invite men of high rank to dine with them and the king (Est. 5); Herodotus (5:18) states that not only the concubines, but also the young wives were accustomed to be present at Persian feasts; Plutarch, however, says concubines but not wives might be present (Symposium I., 1).

† Paul Haupt thinks it not improbable that these words were taken from a different document, and referred originally not to the midwives but to the Israelites. Cf. his paper *Batim lo benuyim*, *Johns Hopkins University Circulars*, July, 1894, p. 109 note.

‡ Cf. Rom., 9:16; 1 Cor. 3:6 sq.

direct address, reiterating his reproof on the basis of a charge more definite and more detailed. V. 2 thus stands not so much in addition to v. 1 as furnishing fresh examples of unblest human activity, but rather in continuation of it, giving exactness and vividness to the picture.

Wolfson, who terms this the Psalm of architecture, explains the verse as a reference to the labors of agriculture, since "who rises so early or works so late as does the tiller of the soil?" Such an interpretation is comparable to that of the Targum, where the passage is explained of robbers who early and late are intent upon their criminal pursuit. Others see here a description of extraordinary exertions to obtain wealth (Hgstb., Hupf., Kamph., Del., Cheyne).

שבת *sit* is here used not of sedentary occupations, i. e., of sitting down to work* (Luther, de Wette, Riehm, Olsh., Del.) but in opposition to קום *arise*, not, as de Wette thinks, so much in parallelism as adversative; cf. Ps. 139:2: *Thou, ידעת שבתִי וקומִי* thou knowest my sitting-down and my rising-up; Deut. 6:7; 11:19; Lam. 3:68. The sense will therefore be not *prolong the sitting up* (Langer, de Wette), but *defer the sitting-down*, leave off work late; שבת in the meaning of *to sit up late* is without examples, though מאחרי is used in opposition to משכימי with this connotation in Isa. 5:11: הוֹי מִשְׁכִּימֵי בִבְקֶר שֹׁכֵר יִרְדְּפוּ מֵאַחֲרֵי בִנְשָׁף *Woe to those who rise early in the morning, who are eager for strong drink, who prolong it into the night, or better, who put off ceasing to drink until late in the evening. Who rise early is contrasted with who sit down late*, the early commencement of work against the tardy seeking of rest. The two phrases conjointly set forth an unusual prolongation of the working-day (Kamph.), a weary round of toil from the first ray of dawn until the fading of evening's twilight.

Bread of toil, i. e., won by toil,† the reward of hard labor; cf. Gen. 3:17: בֹּעֵת אַפֶּיךָ תֹאכַל לֶחֶם *In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread*; Ps. 80:6; Prov. 20:17; 31:27; 4:17; Isa. 30:20.

To eat the bread of toil stands in apposition with the two preceding clauses, but not in more immediate connection with the latter (as Hitzig thinks); the phrase expresses the result of all the troubles to which the parties addressed have subjected themselves: uncalled for exertions bring no enjoyment of unusual profit; to no purpose are the troubles taken.

Clarisse takes כֵּן in the sense of *rightly* or *well*; cf. Num. 36:5: *The tribe of Joseph's sons כֵּן * * * דְּבָרִים* has said well; Num. 27:7; 2 Kgs. 7:9; לֶחֶם *bread* is then supplied as object of *he gives*. But most exegetes correctly explain the word as meaning *the same*, i. e., the result of labor. Cheyne, however, renders it by *surely* and takes שָׁנָא *sleep* as the object: *surely he giveth his beloveth sleep*; the quiet, restful slumber of God's people is put in antithesis to the restless

* Cf. Mal. 3:3.

† Not *bad bread*; cf. Dan. 10:3: לֶחֶם חֲמֻדֹּת *dainty food*.

activity of those who, anxious to ensure their temporal welfare, deprive themselves of necessary sleep. But, as Hengstenberg observes, the theme here is not *sleep* but *gain*; and the point Cheyne emphasizes is but one of several in the sentence. **נשן** *in sleep* is rather to be considered the accusative of time; while the object of the verb is embraced in **כִּן**. *The same*, the object sought which may be won by him who labors incessantly without divine help, only at the expense of toil, is reached by the servants of God without extra exertion, nay, it is even bestowed on them while they sleep; the divine Benefactor grants to the righteous that, with ordinary efforts, in peace and the enjoyment of rest, they may obtain all needful things, whether protection or property.

Two inferences may be drawn from this: (a) that the poet conceives that the party he addresses is working with unwarrantable zeal and energy and in opposition to God's will; (b) he intends to emphasize not only the greater fruitfulness of action approved by God, but even the reasonableness and propriety of resting in quiet confidence that JHVVH will procure what is required; no human effort is needed, Omnipotence is the source of help and protection. With the work going forward the writer has no sympathy; it is worldly and indicative of distrust in God.

Nehemiah's piety and orthodoxy cannot be advanced as in any way repugnant to the idea that his work is alluded to here. A very wide difference of opinion as to what was right and proper existed between the parties in Jerusalem, and either side might claim reason and the approval of God for its views. In view of the fact that at the head of those opposed to the governor were nobles, priests and prophets, men of influence in religious affairs, it is in no wise strange that they should employ this means to occasion his downfall and accuse him of irreligion.

(8) *An inheritance from JHVVH*; cf. Gen. 48:9: **בְּנֵי הָאֵשֶׁר נָתַן לִי אֱלֹהִים** *They are my sons whom God has given me*; Gen. 38:5; Prov. 19:4. Barrenness was regarded as a visitation of divine judgment (Gen. 20:18; 16:2; 29:31); the birth of a child, especially of a son, was a mark of the divine favor (Gen. 30:22, 24; 1 Sam. 1:11; 2:21). *Sons* together with the parallel expression *fruit of the womb* may include children of both sexes (Del.); cf. Deut. 7:13; 28:4, 11, 18. But as the context clearly connotes, sons are especially referred to here. The Oriental of ancient times like the Oriental of to-day boasted of the sons he had begotten; daughters were of minor importance.

(4) *Sons of youth*, not young children, but the offspring of young, vigorous parents,* since such as a rule possess greater physical excellence and superior constitutional endowments as compared with children begotten in old age; cf.

* Cf. Eccl. 12:1, which is rendered by Prof. Haupt (vid. his remarks *On the Book of Ecclesiastes* in the *Johns Hopkins University Circulars*, June 1891, p. 116): *Remember thy well* (i. e. the mother of thy children) *in the days of thy vigor*; cf. Prov. 5:15-18.

Gen. 49:3: **רֵאוּבֵן בְּכֹרִי אַתָּה כְּחִי וְרֵאשִׁית אוֹנִי יֵתֵר שְׂאֵת וִיתֵר עֵץ**
Reuben, thou art my first born, my strength and the beginning of my wealth, the excellence of majesty and the excellence of might; Gen. 21:7; 44:20; 37:8. But not only this; also these children will be able to help their parents when they have most need of assistance in their declining years.

As arrows, as the bright (Jer. 51:11; Ecc. 10:10), sharp-pointed (Ps. 45:6; 120:4; Isa. 5:28) shafts in the hands of a trained warrior (cf. note on 120:4). Rosenmüller thinks the strength of the children is compared to that of a strong bowman, their uprightness to the straight shafts of the arrows; but the point of comparison lies in the idea of means of defense and offense (Hgstb., Hupf., Del.); special stress should be laid on the notion of efficiency; the experienced warrior will not miss his mark, his keen arrow will penetrate deep; so the vigorous progeny of mature parents will furnish sure and satisfactory protection.

(5) *Happy the man*, he is to be commended and congratulated as one who has done his duty, and who may reasonably expect the due recompense. *Filled his quiver*, i. e. begotten a large family, filled his house with children; thus he is like a bowman with a quiver full of arrows.

The closing verses have generally been taken as containing an allusion to suits at law or cases in general before courts, since the gate was the place where justice was administered (cf. notes on 122:2); the sons are supposed to plead their father's cause (Clar., Hgstb., de Wette *et al.*) against the enemies, i. e. the parties on the other side; cf. Jer. 12:1; Josh. 20:4; 2 Sam. 19:30. **יִבְשׁוּ**, rendered by *put to shame*, is taken to refer to the mortification and disgrace of defeat, or to being intimidated and browbeaten by the opposing parties. The subject of the verb is either the children alone whose efforts will not be frustrated (Rosenm., de Wette, Hitz.), or the father and sons together (Del.). The emendations proposed by Grætz, to read the sing. **יִבֵּשׁ** and to substitute **יִרִיב** for **יִדְבֵּר**, seem unnecessary and unwarranted; Bickell's translation indicates the same substitution of the sing. for the plur.

According to this interpretation there is introduced into the Psalm at its close an entirely new idea for which there is no preparation, though the transition seems natural enough: not only in war, but also in legal strife the sons will furnish protection. If only the general notion, that all things are to be referred to JHVH as the source of blessings, is the chief thought of the Psalm, and no well defined connection exists between the stanzas, then the interpretation may hold. But, as may easily be shown, the Psalm is a unit; and, moreover, the language of v. 5 is capable of another explanation. Upon the meaning of **אֶת יִדְבְּרוּ** the interpretation hinges. By some commentators (Gesenius in his *Thesaurus*, Rosenm., Langer) the verb is rendered by *destroy, kill, or annihilate*. The sense thus obtained agrees with the preceding verse much better than does

the idea of legal processes. Further, passages are at hand to illustrate this meaning. 2 Chron. 22:10: *When Athaliah, mother of Ahaziah, saw that her son was dead, she arose והתרבר and destroyed all the royal seed of the house of Judah* (cf. the parallel passage in 2 Kgs. 11:1, where *אבד* destroy is used); more instructive are the following passages: Ps. 18:48 (cf. 2 Sam. 22:48): *The God that deals vengeance on my behalf וידבר עמים תחת and drives back the nations under me*, i. e. so that they are subdued under me; Ps. 47:4: *ידבר He drives back the nations under us*. That the verb conveys the idea of *repulsing* or *defeating* these examples clearly show, and the aptness of such meaning here is plain. The force of *in the gate* is now discernible; against the gates besiegers directed their attempts to effect an entrance;* cf. Isa. 22:7; to possess the gate of the enemy was to capture and hold his town; cf. Gen. 22:17; 24:60; the gate was often the scene of fierce and desperate fighting: cf. 2 Sam 11:3; Isa. 28:6.

Over against *ידברו drive back* is placed the parallel expression *לא יבשו will not be scattered*. The idea of failure, defeat, is implied in the word *בש*, which connotes the mental side of disaster; there occur passages where its force is but weakly expressed by *be ashamed*, and can only be brought out by a circumlocution, as *disappointed in confidence, foiled in purpose*; cf. Jer. 48:20; 50:2; 46:24; Ps. 44:8; 53:6; 83:18; or else some stronger phrase, as *be routed, scattered in defeat*.† Such is the sense here: the sturdy warriors will not suffer the disgrace of defeat, but will drive back the enemy. The subjects of the verbs are the same in both cases—not the father, but his sons, whose effective warfare in defence of the state reflects honor upon their parent.

It is now possible to discover the relation between the two stanzas, and to solve the problem of their connection. (1) The parts of the Psalm are placed in antithetic correspondence to each other; the former is negative, denunciatory, the latter marked by a tone of positive commendation. The end sought by the workers spoken of in the first stanza is assured in the second, i. e. protection for the city; it is only the means employed to secure that end of which the poet disapproves, and he therefore recommends the means he thinks should be adopted. In the final clause of v. 2 is a brief statement of his proposition, which is elaborated in vs. 3 sqq.; in the development of the family, not in material building, is the hope of the state as well as of the individual. (2) Thus appears the more important connecting link consisting in the double use of the

* In illustration of this passage Haupt quotes an Assyrian proverb: *šlu ša kakkašu la dannu, nakru ina pān abullišu ul ippattar*="the enemy will not be scattered in front of the gate of a city whose weapons are not strong." Cf. *Johns Hopkins University Circulars*, July 1894, p. 109, note **.

† Professor Haupt regards *בש* in this and similar passages as the equivalent of Arabic *bātha* or *battha* "to scatter;" cf. *Johns Hopkins University Circulars*, July 1894, p. 109, note †.

verb בנה *to build*, (a) in the more ordinary material sense, and (b) in the figurative application of the word to the building up of families;* cf. Gen. 16:2; 30:3; Deut. 25:9; 1 Sam. 2:35; Ruth 4:11; Hos. 9:11.

The purpose of the Psalm is, therefore, to advance the thesis that through JHVH, not through the devices of men, is protection to be attained; in explanation of this, sons, the gift of God, are named as the true defence of the city; and by natural inference from this only that man does his duty who begets a large family, while, on the other hand, he who does not do so, and prevents or hinders others, is working against the best interests of the community and even against God.

The priests and others (in view of the prophecies of Zechariah, cf. 2:1-5; 8:4 sq.; 2:6 sqq.) believed in Jerusalem as the spiritual center of the people with JHVH as a wall of fire to shield the place from harm; so that there was no need for walls of stone. Nehemiah by his worldly ideas and methods offended the prophets; his measures of reform seemed anything but favorable to happy married life. In view of the small families the acquisition of children seemed the chief thing. Hence the language of the Psalm: if the Lord is going to protect us, we need not labor on the walls, we need not watch against the Samaritans—such work is useless. But we do need the building up of our families, and we do not want any foreign eunuch here to interfere with us and defeat our wishes with his ill-timed schemes.

Notes on Ps. 128.

The contents are of a general nature and by themselves do not necessarily convey any special historical† allusion. One purpose of the piece is revealed by the cheerful tone, the bright outlook for the future, viz: encouragement. In the promises of temporal prosperity, of children, of the city's welfare, conditioned upon obedience to God, seems to be contained allusion to the state of affairs directly the opposite of that described, when prevalent distress, both public and private, might fitly be explained as due to the sins of the people. Therefore Rosenmüller (comparing Zech.8:) thought the song was written to lift up the depressed spirits of the early colonists‡ by hopes of a brighter future, and to incite the people to work for the common good; the fear of JHVH must displace the transgressions which have occasioned evil. But one fact must not be overlooked, namely, the close accord in idea between this Psalm and the companion piece 127. Each suggests the same remedy, i. e. piety, to procure the welfare of individuals and of the congregation; in each the blessings appointed fall to the same class of

* Cf. Prof. Haupt's paper, *Batim lo benuyim* in the *Johns Hopkins University Circulars*, July 1894, p. 108 sq.

† Olshausen arbitrarily refers the Psalm to the times succeeding the release of Jerusalem from the Syrian dominion.

‡ Hengstenberg also assigns the piece to the earlier period of the Return.

persons, the beloved of God, those who fear him. The former song enforces by contrast and applies in a single matter the thought which the latter amplifies and extends by general application of it to all interests, personal or common, civil or domestic; to the faithful JHVH will not only give sons who will protect them from foes, but he will also assure internal peace and happiness, the increase and perpetuity of the families and the consequent growth and permanence of the city. Yet Ps. 128 is not an imitation of 127 (Rosenm.), nor an idle repetition of the same thoughts. The poet's view is broader, not so much restricted by special considerations of immediate moment such as occupied the writer of 127. The polemical feature so marked in the latter piece is wanting here, and it seems hardly probable that a reproach against Nehemiah is intended (Grætz). On the contrary, the Psalm may have been written by one of the orthodox party* in reply to Ps. 127, urging the citizens to heed God's law and not to listen to the seductive speeches made by the party of the nobles and the prophets.

The Psalm consists of two stanzas (of three verses each), each introduced by the condition upon the fulfillment of which depends the promised prosperity. The first stanza states the more immediate blessings to the individual in business life and the home circle, while the second discloses the more remote results of piety in the advancement of common interests, the perpetuation of the family and the state.

(1) This introductory verse is an epitome of the contents of the Psalm.

According to the Masoretic text the verse should read: *Happy is every one who fears, etc.*; thus the characteristics of the type are first predicated of an indefinite individual; then the poet, passing into direct address, enlivens his discourse by a more personal application of the remarks: every one who fears and obeys JHVH is blessed; if the conditions are fulfilled in thee, thou wilt obtain the consequent results. Olshausen suggests that the change from the third to the second person is connected with a change of voices in the rendition of the Psalm; but this is improbable. The transition is also abrupt and harsh; compare with it the easy passage from the general to the personal in Ps. 119:1-5 sqq. More reasonable and satisfactory is the adjustment proposed by Grætz, who suggests to read **כִּאֲשֶׁר־** being taken from **כֹּל** and the **ל** stricken out), i. e., *blessed art thou*. When it is remembered that the original text was written in the archaic Hebrew character, without spacing between the words or the use of *literæ finales*, it will readily be seen how the scribes may have erred here. So from the start the poet addresses the God-fearing individual, and the attention thus claimed is held to the end.

By the *ways* of the Lord is meant the course of conduct, the manner of living prescribed in the Law. So, in pursuance of the figure, a life of obedience is

* It is also quite possible that the piece was composed by one who sympathized with Ezra and Nehemiah in their effort to introduce the Law in 444.

termed *walking in the straight road*, while any neglect or failure to keep the requirements of the Law is a deviation from the path of moral rectitude, a turning aside to crooked paths; cf. note on 125:5; also Ps. 25:4, 8, 9, 12; Acts 9:2; and the Coran I, 5, 6. *To fear JHVH* is to keep his commandments; cf. Ps. 112:1: *Happy the man that fears JHVH, מאד ובמצותיו חפץ that delights greatly in his commandments*; Ps. 119:1; 1:1 sqq.

Despite the second person in address, it by no means follows that the writer has in mind a definite individual; the verse is rather addressed to the ideal personality, the most excellent type of man and citizen described (Hgsth.). The latter clause is explanatory of the first, perhaps a more exact statement of the condition required, a restriction purposed to exclude pretenders who, simulating piety and reverence of JHVH, might claim the blessing promised. The condition of the heart toward God must be vouched for by actual conformity to the divine Law. Wolfson sees here an allusion to the mixed worship of the heathen tribes settled in Samaria; cf. 2 Kgs. 17:33: *את יהוה היו יראים ואת אלהיהם היו עבדים* : *JHVH they feared, but they served their own Gods in the manner of the nations from whence they had been carried away.*

(2) The poet now passes on to the special illustrations of happiness, and first takes up the matter of personal interests.

The words *the fruit of thy hands* are put first for the sake of emphasis. The phrase means first labor itself, as in Gen. 31:42; then, as here, the outcome of work; cf. Deut. 28:33: *פרי אדמתך וכל יגיעך יאכל עם אשר לא ידעת* : *The fruit of thy land and all thy labors a nation which thou knowest not will enjoy*; Ps. 109:11; 78:46; Ecc. 5:18; 6:2; Job 10:3; Hag. 1:11. *תאכל thou wilt enjoy*, as in Isa. 8:10; Jer. 29:5; Job 31:8; Eccl. 5:18; 6:2.

Happy wilt thou be stands here in parallelism to the following, *it will be all right with thee*.^{*} Your good fortune is secured; you will not work and fail to see and enjoy the produce of your toil; or worse still, exhaust yourself by application to business only to see others, your enemies,[†] perhaps, feasting upon your gains. But from an unfailing source there will flow to you rich blessings of success and increase:‡ cf. Ps. 1:3: *והיה כעץ שתול על פלגי מים אשר פרו יתן בעתו ועלהו לא יבול וכל אשר יעשה יצליח* : *And he will be like a tree planted beside streams of water, which yields its fruit in the proper season and whose leaf does not wither, while whatever he does he carries through to a prosperous issue*; Ps. 119:71, 92.

^{*} The Mishnic Tract Pirqæ Aboth, 4:1 gives the following explanation of this passage: *אשריך בעולם הזה ושוב לך לעולם הבא* "Happy art thou in this world and it will be well with thee in the world to come."

[†] Cf. Deut. 28:30 sqq.; Amos 5:11; Mic. 6:15; Hos. 4:10; Eccl. 6:2; 4:8.

[‡] The idea (advanced by Qamchi, Calvin, Venema and Delitzsch) that the reference is to allowing oneself to be nourished by others instead of undertaking self-support, is against analogy and the connection.

There is no need to regard 2^a as the foundation of the statement in 2^b, and hence in order to bring out the sense of the passage, to invert the order of the clauses; 2^b is simply a more emphatic repetition of the more general terms of 2^a.

(3) Not alone in business interests, but also in domestic relations will the God-fearing man be blessed. The reproach of childlessness will not rest upon him, but his wife will be honored because she will be as a fruitful vine in the inner apartments of the house. For two things especially was a woman held in high esteem: *fruitfulness*; she must be the mother of many sons; cf. Gen. 30:23; 1 Sam. 1:6, 11; Ps. 118:9; and *domesticity*; she should, in womanly modesty, in fidelity to her husband, in devotion to the interests of her household, remain within the sacred inclosure of the home;* if she frequents the street her character may be misjudged, and discredit will attach itself to her name and shame be cast upon her husband; cf. Prov. 7:11, 12.

The vine, laden with rich clusters, is frequently used as a type of productiveness; cf. Isa. 32:12; Ezek. 19:10; Jer. 2:21; Hos. 14:7; Joel 2:22; Deut. 8:8; and this idea is the *tertium comparationis* here. Tholuck, however, thinks the weakness of the vine, its inability to support itself, the necessity of a stake to which it may cling, is also alluded to. From a similar idea some have referred the words **בֵּיתִי בֵּיתֶךָ** (rendered: *on the sides of thy house*) to the vine. But against this are to be urged the connection, the parallel expression (*around thy table* is certainly said of the children), and further, what seems from analogous phrases to be the correct meaning of **בֵּיתֶךָ** here. **יֵרֵכָה** means *hind part*,† whence the meaning *side*, in particular the *rear side*; cf. Ex. 26:22, 23:27; 1 Kgs. 6:16; Ezek. 46:19; then the signification of *extreme, innermost recesses* as being at the rear, or the *interior parts* in general, as the *hold* of a ship (Jon. 1:5), or the *depths* of a pit (Isa. 14:15; Ezek. 32:23), the *fastnesses* of a mountain forest (Isa. 37:24; 2 Kgs. 19:23), the *interior* of a cave (1 Sam. 24:4), the *penetralia* of a house (Amos 6:10), and finally *remote regions* (Ezek. 38:6, 15; Ps. 48:3; Jer. 50:41). The word is used here of the women's apartments, which were most secluded from the outside world.

The olive shoots are not, as Rosenmüller supposed, the branches that bear the fruit, but young shoots of the olive tree which grow with remarkable rapidity and require no attention (Hengstenberg); cf. Ps. 52:10; 144:12: **אֲשֶׁר בָּנִינוּ כְּנֹטְעִים מִגְּדִלִים בְּנִעוּרֵיהֶם** *That our sons may be like plants, growing up in their youth*; Gen. 49:22; Jer. 11:16; Hos. 14:7. The point of comparison is vigor together with the notion of beauty; strong, hearty children are promised to the righteous man, such as will not suffer the blight of disease, or be retarded in

* Cf. Titus 2:5; 1 Tim. 5:14; in classical literature: *Iliad* 6:490 sqq.; *Odyssey* 1:266 sqq.; 21:266 sqq.

† *L. g. Assyrian arkatu*; cf. Haupt, *Die Sumerischen Familiengesetze*, Leipzig, 1879, p. 15, note 3.

growth by physical weakness; for in this case there is no iniquity of the parent to be visited on the children (cf. Ex. 20:5; 34:7; Num. 14:18; Deut. 5:9); but on account of his righteousness he will be blessed in regard to the fruit of his body (Deut. 28:1-4, 11).

Around thy table, an apt allusion to the home circle; the few words serve to call up one of the most charming pictures of domestic life. Perhaps there is here some reference to the healthful appetites of growing children, with the side-notion that the father will always be able to make abundant provision for the support and comfort of his family.

(4, 5) As in 127:3 the new stanza is introduced by a hortatory interjection calling attention to what is now to be said; כֵּן *thus* points to the statements that follow.

Not only will the righteous man be blessed personally, but his piety will have a good effect on his fellow-men; the good of the whole community will be secured; *thou wilt see the good of Jerusalem*. From which it follows directly that it is the duty of every citizen to obey the divine law in order to promote the welfare of the state; cf. Prov. 14:34: צְדָקָה תְרוֹמֵם גֹּי וְחַסֵּד לְאֻמִּים חֲטָאָה *Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach of peoples*; cf. notes on 122:6-9.

The poet's words are not the expression of his own desires (Rosenm., Hupf.); this would make the Psalm very weak. What gives power to the poem is that it is founded on the Law, it is a reminder of the promised rewards to be bestowed according to the attitude of each man and of the community toward the *Torah* (cf. Deut. 38). The language is that of positive assurance, made as it were upon divine authority.

(6) Here again the language abounds with allusions to the feelings and aspirations of an Oriental. It was an honor to be the father of many sons, to secure the perpetuity of the family; that the family name should be blotted out was an irreparable disgrace; cf. the imprecation in Ps. 109:13: יְהִי אַחֲרֵיתוֹ לְהַכְרִית *Let his posterity be cut off; in the next generation let their name be wiped out*; Ps. 9:5; Job 18:17; 2 Kgs. 8:19. Secondly, long life was esteemed a blessing, especially when the aged man could point to the evidences of his family's growth, when grandchildren were rising up to spread his name and maintain his honor in Israel;* cf. Prov. 17:6: עֹמֶרֶת זָקֵנִים בְּנֵי בָנִים וּתְפָאֶרֶת בְּנֵי אֲבוֹתָם *The crown of old men are children's children and the glory of sons are their fathers*; Gen. 45:10; 46:7; Gen. 50:23; Ex. 20:12; Ps. 91:16; Prov. 8:1, 2; 4:10; 9:11; Zech. 8:4.

* Professor Haupt has pointed out that the same idea prevails in the cuneiform inscriptions. Thus Nebuchadnezzar prays: šibūti lukšud, lušbā luttūti "let me reach old age, let me be satisfied with progeny" (vid. E. Schrader, *Kleinasiatische Bibliothek*, Band III 2, 29:8; 39:50); cf. *Johns Hopkins University Circulars*, July, 1894, p. 109.

The effects of individual piety are not to be confined within the narrow sphere of private and domestic life, nor are they transient; spreading their beneficial influence through the community, they ensure the common-weal; and continuing throughout the life of him who by obedience to the Law brought them about, they have promise of permanence through the works of his children.

The liturgical formula: *peace be upon Israel*—forms a fitting conclusion to this Song of cheering promise; whether written by the author or added by a later hand, it may be conceived as expressing the wish that the blessings of peace may be secured to Israel through the means just pointed out. Personal piety and civil prosperity are linked together; those who desire the latter must have the former; then they may plead the promises.

Notes on Ps. 120.

Two elements of the distressing situation referred to in the Psalm stand forth prominently: (a) slanderers are causing injury to the people, and (b) barbarous neighbors manifest a spirit of hostility to peace-seeking Israel. Actual strife is threatened, not in progress, and the position of the people is not that of a victor, but of a sufferer; so that Hitzig is mistaken in assigning the Song to the epoch in the Maccabean period when Jonathan defeated the Arabs and marched to Damascus (cf. 1 Macc. 12:31 sq.). A strong objection to the interpretation of Wolfson has already been noted in the introductory discussion of the Title. His explanation of v. 2 as an allusion to the words of the Assyrian general (2 Kgs. 18:31 sq.), by which he sought to cause a defection among the defenders of Jerusalem, is not inapt; but there is no reason for his violent disruption of the Psalm into two entirely distinct pieces, the one referring to the distress of Judah, the other to the Israelites in captivity; unless indeed it be that he could not otherwise explain v. 5.

Nor is Bæthgen correct in supposing that the enemy was a godless and powerful faction that had been stirring up quarreling and strife in Jerusalem, and was not composed of heathen, since these used in the oppression of Israel other weapons than the tongue. In the post-exilic period, to which he thinks the Psalm belongs, there was a time when non-Jewish peoples in Palestine did employ this very means (i. e. slander) to procure trouble for the colony in Judea, when neighboring tribes did oppose with intrigue and menaces of violence the efforts of the Jews to advance the welfare of Jerusalem; this time is, it seems, the period when the walls were being rebuilt under the direction of Nehemiah. Rosenmüller (following Tiling) correctly supposed that the Samaritans were the enemies here alluded to; but erred in adopting the view of the Chronist (in Ezra 4:24) that the accusations of this people (Ezra 4:6-23) caused an interruption of the work on the temple. Hupfeld's objection that Ezra 4:6 sqq. refers to matters that took place

in the reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes does not invalidate the idea that the Samaritans are meant in the Psalm.

As shown in the Historical Sketch, Nehemiah's work in Jerusalem was not approved by the neighboring peoples in Palestine; reports were in circulation that the Jews intended to revolt and to make Nehemiah their king; these slanders reached the Persian officers in Samaria, who promptly communicated them to the king; it was now a period of anxious suspense in Jerusalem; an attack might be made on the city by the hostile tribes in the neighborhood, and the work of the slanderers might prove disastrous; at this time, it appears, the Psalm was written.

(1) De Wette, on the ground that nothing in the Psalm refers to a favorable response already given to the petitioner, understands the verse as an allusion to the present; so Bickell, who renders: *I cry . . . he will hear me*; also Wolfson, and Hitzig and Bæthgen, who take the following verse as the text of the prayer. But the grammatical form of the verse and the analogy of other prayers combine to confirm the usual explanation, that the poet states his past experience and then, in confident expectation, presents a fresh petition. JHVH has proven himself a God who answers prayer, and trust may therefore be reposed in him. The thought is expressed here very briefly, yet as forcibly as in the long introductions to Pss. 40 and 89; cf. also Pss. 85, 71, 31, 28, 25, 27. The verse may simply allude to the past in general (Hgstb., Hupf. et al.), though the great mercy of recent date—the release from captivity—may be specially meant (Clarisse, Rosenm.).

בצרתה corresponds exactly to the expression *in straits*, or to the more familiar phrase, *in a tight place*; the opposite expression is logically, *in a wide place*, i. e., in freedom from the difficulties caused by oppression and danger; cf. Ps. 118:5; מן המצר קראתי יה ענני במרחביה; *Out of distress I cried to JHVH; he answered me* (and put me) *in a wide place*, i. e. set me at liberty; Ps. 18:30; 2 Sam. 22:20; Ps. 31:9.

(2) O JHVH, thou that hearest prayer (Ps. 65:3), as thou didst deliver me in former times, so save me now. The prayer, though a model of brevity, clearly defines the causes of present distress. *Lying lips* and *deceitful tongue* are poetically put for untruthful utterances directed to injure the petitioner; cf. Ps. 109:2; 31:19. The terms aptly describe the means employed to hinder Nehemiah.

(3) The chief difficulty here is the uncertainty as to who or what is the subject. Hebrew usage would permit that לשון *tongue*, though feminine, should be construed with the masculine יתן *will give*; then the masc. לך *to thee* would be taken as meaning the slanderer as the possessor of the tongue (Rosenm., de Wette, Hitz.), and *to give* would have the sense of bringing profit or advantage. This explanation is certainly better than that of Olshausen, who refers לך *to*

JHVH: *What does the deceitful tongue give to thee, and what profit does it bring thee?* and, as there can be no answer to such a question, he considers v. 4 as an expansion of the subject in v. 3. Such an address assumes that God is in alliance with the enemy and has an interest in the deceit; but this idea is at variance with the confidence in God that moves the people to appeal to him. It gives much better sense to take the indefinite masculine subject of יתן as referring back to JHVH, and to consider the verse as an address to the false tongue, לשון being vocative and used poetically of its possessor who is to be thought of in connection with לך.* *To give* would then be taken in the sense of doing injury, inflicting punishment;† cf. Lev. 24:19; Ps. 28:4; and Hos. 9:14, where the words of the prophet have a lively, energetic force: תן להם יהוה מה תתן תן להם רחם משכיל ושרים צמקים *Give it to them, JHVH! What wilt thou give? Give it to them, a miscarrying womb and dry breasts.* So in the present passage; on the ground of experience the Psalmist expects the desired answer to his prayer, and now turns to the enemy to impress them with the certainty and severity of the divine punishment that they will suffer for their wicked speeches: Punish you he certainly will; he will give it to you; and in what shape will his punishment be and how will he increase the magnitude of the penalty. The same form of expression is to be observed in the familiar formula of the oath; cf. notes on Ps. 131:2.

(4) גבור *mighty one*, does not mean God as Delitzsch thinks, nor yet robber or murderer (Clarisse, Thol.); these commentators miss the force of the word which is here used in a technical sense of a trained warrior; cf. Jer. 50:9: חציו כגבור משכיל לא ישוב ריקם *His arrows will be like those of a trained warrior; none will return empty*; Josh. 8:3; Gen. 6:4; 1 Sam. 2:4; 2 Sam. 16:6; Ps. 127:4. The skillful hand of the archer will not miss its aim, but will speed the deadly shaft straight to the mark. The arrows are sharpened to make them more effective because more piercing; cf. Isa. 5:28.

The *broom-plant*, *genista monosperma*, not *juniper* as Aquila has it, is a shrub found in the deserts of Arabia. Under a bush of this species Elijah reclined when wearied, in his flight from Jezebel (1 Kgs. 19:4). The root is extremely bitter and would be used for food only in the greatest emergencies; cf. Job 30:4: הקטפים מלח עלי שיה ושרש רתמים לחמם *Who pluck the salt-plant near the bushes, and the root of the broom-plant is their food*; but the word לחמם may also be rendered *to warm them* (cf. Isa. 47:14), and this gives a better sense, since

* Böttcher (*Exeg. Kritische Aehrenlese zum Alten Testament*, p. 296) thinks the poet conceives of himself as addressed by the Deity with the question: Why this prayer? What evil has the tongue done you? V. 4 would then be the reply. This is possible, as similar dialogues occur elsewhere in the Psalms; e. g. Ps. 32:7, 8, 9, 10. Hitzig also supposes that some person addresses the petitioner, who justifies his prayer by the response in v. 4.

† נתן and עשה are alike used of reward, good or evil, according to merit; cf. Lev. 24:20; Ps. 108:10; Ruth 1:8; Isa. 8:11; Jer. 17:10.

the plant was used for fuel and from the root a very superior sort of charcoal is obtained, which is consumed slowly and yields a great deal of heat.*

Rosenmüller, followed by de Wette, thinks the verse was spoken by the people, who compare the great evils they suffer to *sharp arrows* and *glowing coals*. But much more naturally the words stand as an answer to the question in v. 3, and are spoken by the same person; the character of the punishment is described. The Masoretic accentuation is to be preserved, so that שְׁנוֹנִים may not be construed with עֵם, i. e. *sharpened in or by means of coals of broom*† (Olsh.). עֵם here means *together with, in addition to*, so that the members of the verse correspond to those of v. 3: Sharp arrows, shot by a warrior, he will give, and he will add glowing coals of broom. The penalty is adjudged according to the *lex talionis* in Exod. 21:23 sqq.; cf. Lev. 24:19 sq.; Ps. 17:17; Isa. 59:18; Obad. 15, 16; Ps. 9:16 sq.

The tongue is likened to a sword, Ps. 57:5: נֶפֶשׁ בְּתוֹךְ לִבָּאִים אֲשַׁכְּבָה לְהָטִים בְּנֵי אָדָם שְׁנֵיהֶם חֲנִית וְחִצִּים וְלִשׁוֹנָם חֶרֶב חֶרֶב מִפִּי חֶרֶב אֶת לִשׁוֹנָם קִשְׁתָּם וְיִדְרְכוּ אֶת לִשׁוֹנָם כִּשְׁתָּם חֶרֶב שֶׁחַט My soul is among lions, I lie down with furious men whose teeth are spears and arrows and whose tongue is a sharp sword; Ps. 64:4; to a bow, Jer. 9:2: וְיִדְרְכוּ אֶת לִשׁוֹנָם כִּשְׁתָּם They bend their tongue as their bow; and to an arrow, Jer. 9:7: חֶרֶב שֶׁחַט A killing arrow is their tongue, it speaks deceit. False witnesses are compared to a sword and arrows, Prov. 25:18: מִפִּי חֶרֶב וְחֶרֶב מִפִּי חֶרֶב A war club and a sword and a sharp arrow is the man who bears false witness against his neighbor; Ps. 59:8. Both the tongue and lips are compared to a fire; cf. Isa. 30:27; Prov. 26:23; 16:27; 26:21; James 3:6. Fire is sent as a punishment; cf. Ps. 21:10; Lam. 2:3 sq.; Neh. 1:6; Ps. 140:10 sq.

The sense of the verse will therefore be: Like for like will he give to you; with sharp, piercing arrows will he requite you for your cutting, cruel lies; and he will add live coals of broom which, with burning heat, intense and lasting, will repay the fierceness of your cherished hate.

(5) With this verse the second section of the poem begins; the writer in the name of the people bewails the hostility of their neighbors.

Meshech is in the Old Testament usually associated with Tubal; in Gen. 10:2, the two peoples are called sons of Japheth; cf. also Ezek. 27:13; 38:2, 3. But in Isa. 66:19, Tubal alone is mentioned in the Masoretic text, though the LXX. has Meshech as well. Also in Assyrian literature after the time of Sargon (721-705) Tabal and Masku (Mu-ush-ku) are mentioned together as in

* Cf. Jerome, *Opera* ed. Vallarsius, ed. Alt. Venetis 1766, Vol. 1, p. 480, *Epistola ad Fabiolam*, XV, where he refers to the story (found in the Midrash *Tehillim*) about the travelers who, having kindled a fire of broom, went off, and on returning the following year, found it still burning.

† This would refer to the custom of hardening the points of the arrows in the embers.

Herodotus III. 94, VII. 78 Τιβάρηνοι . . . Μόσχοι. Both peoples dwelt in the mountainous regions to the southeast of the Black Sea; the Moschi between the sources of the Phasis and the Cyrus, the Tibareni eastward of the Thermodon, in what was later the kingdom of Pontus in Asia Minor.

Kedar was one of the most important Arabic tribes among the Nabateans. From about 800 B. C. down they are frequently mentioned. They were good bowmen (Isa. 21:16, 17), dwelt in black tents (Cant. 1:5) or open villages (Isa. 42:11; Jer. 49:31), were rich in sheep and camels, in which they carried on trade (Isa. 60:7; Jer. 49:32; Ezek. 27:21). They had their seat in north Arabia, between Arabia Petræa and Babylonia; after the time of Alexander the tribe disappeared, though the name is still to be found in rabbinical works as a designation of the Arabs.

The occurrence here in juxtaposition of these names of peoples who dwelt at such a great distance from each other, and, Meshech in particular, so far from Palestine, has given rise to much difficulty. The Ancient Versions did not understand מֶשֶׁךְ *Meshech*, but took it as meaning a great while, a long protracted time, from מִשָּׁךְ to *draw out*, to *prolong*, and explained it of a lengthy stay among the enemy.

The law of *parallelismus membrorum* demands that, as in the second hemistich, so in the first, the name shall be that of a people. Many exegetes, accepting this, take the names in a figurative sense: *people of the sort of Meshech and Kedar*, these standing as examples of savage men, "just as we might speak of Turks or Hottentots" (de Wette). Some * think of the dispersion and suppose that Meshech and Kedar indicate the remote regions in which the Jews were scattered, these places being mentioned as representative ones (Olsh., Cheyne). Similarly Wolfson, who sees in the verse a reference to the captivity of the Ten Tribes, thinks these places denote the distant localities to which the captives were transported. It seems most probable, however, that the verse describes another element in the situation already pictured in v. 2. Meshech and Kedar are mentioned simply as representatives of the foreign elements which formed so large a part of the population of Palestine and Syria in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. It was a motley host of peoples gathered from among the rebellious subjects of the Assyrian conquerors. Tiling's idea, that these two tribes were among those transported to Samaria, appears possible and even probable, though no direct statement has been found to confirm the supposition. It was a custom with the Assyrian kings to remove rebellious peoples from their own countries to other places in the vast empire. Now, it is known from the records of Sargon (*Nimroud-Inscription* l. 11, *Cylinder-Inscrip.*, ll. 15, 23, 24)† that in 715 he conquered a

* So Saadya, Clarisse, Rosenm., Hgstb., Hupf., Del.

† Cf. E. Schrader, *Kleininschriftl. Bibliothek*, II, Berlin, 1890, pp. 38, 42

coalition of nations in the north, among them the Moschi; he then operated against the Arabs in the south and placed some Arab tribes in Samaria. It is not impossible that a similar disposition was made of the Moschi, especially in view of the fact that Samaria seems to have been used by the Assyrian kings as a sort of Botany Bay, since no less than three kings are mentioned as having colonized the place.* In Ezra 4:2 Esarhaddon is said to have brought up to Samaria some of the adversaries of the Jews. One of the most remarkable achievements of this king was his expedition into the heart of Arabia, where he inspired great terror among the desert tribes; so that he perhaps was responsible for the presence of Arabs in Samaria. His successor, the illustrious Aššurbanipal (the Asnapper of Ezra 4:10) may have settled the Kedarenes in the place, for he directed military operations against the tribe about 650; and it is known that he colonized the land of Israel with a number of alien tribes.

The sense of the verse will thus be: it is a grievous misfortune that I have such unsympathetic, uncongenial neighbors, these barbarians from the north and these restless nomads from Arabia.

(6) *Long enough already*; the unfriendly neighbors among whom the people live, suggest to the poet's mind the captivity. Enough and more than enough have I had of such company in Babylon, where, during the weary years of Exile, I was forced to associate with my hereditary foes. The verse is not a key to the character of the neighbors represented by Meshech and Kedar (Hgsth.); that is supplied in v. 7.

The haters of peace are the Chaldeans, who were perhaps not so warlike as the Assyrians, but nevertheless this disposition was more conspicuous in them than in the older Babylonians; the empire they had won by violence had to be maintained by force. Revolts had to be put down and invasions repelled. The expressions found in the prophets justify the above epithet; cf. Isa. 14:4 sqq. 16 sq.; Hab. 1:5 sqq.

(7) *I am peaceful*; literally: *I am peace*; cf. the analogous expression in Ps. 109:4: *In return for my love they assail me*, ואני תפלה and *I am all prayer*. But even if I speak, i. e., in the interests of peace; the contents of the speech will naturally be sentiments in accord with the disposition just defined. The full phrase כי לא שלום ידברו to speak peace occurs in Ps. 35:20: ועל רגעי ארץ דברי מרמות יחשבו For they do not speak peace but plan mischiefs against the quiet people of the land; Zech. 9:10; Ps. 28:3 and 128:8 q. v.

They are for war; they will listen to no overtures for peace. The verse quite aptly describes the anxiety of the Jews to be let alone and the hostile disposition of the alien inhabitants of the land. Inflamed with anger and jealousy,

* Cf. 2 Kgs., 17:24; Ezra 4:2, 9, 10.

these enemies were endeavoring by warlike demonstrations to frighten Nehemiah and the Jews, and paid no heed to conciliatory words.

Notes on Ps. 131.

This Song is but a fragment of a lost whole, yet in itself is complete and intelligible, though the definite evidence of personal or national reference may have been contained in the part that has disappeared. Some commentators see no historical allusion here, while others interpret the words as the pious remarks of one who does not seek to pry into the great and wonderful mysteries of the divine nature.* It has been thought (Hupf., Hitz.) that the expression of the heart's disposition toward God is an unnatural one for the congregation, but, as Nowack observes, why this is so, does not appear. Several exegetes, accepting the superscription as a guide-post, consider that the Psalm was composed by David in reply to the false charges of Saul and his courtiers (so Langer; cf. 1 Sam. 24:10 sq.; 26:19; 20:31); and Delitzsch thinks the little piece is but an echo of David's response to Michal (2 Sam. 6:21 sq.) when she rebuked him for disgracing himself before the people. Wolfson supposes that Hezekiah was the author; allusion is made to the humility of the king after God's wrath had been aroused against him and the inhabitants of Jerusalem on account of his pride (2 Chron. 32:25 sq.); the king, after the trial imposed on him by God in the matter of the ambassadors sent from Babylon (2 Chron. 32:31; Isa. 39), wrote the Song in order to show "that he had acted in uprightness of heart." Hitzig argues that if the writer thinks it necessary to say that he has not had lofty desires, then an honor is being shown him, or a dignity being conferred, which he has not sought; so Hitzig supposes that Simon Maccabæus here expresses the feelings with which he received the news of the resolution adopted by the popular assembly (1 Macc. 14:25 sq.) which, on account of his services, appointed him *ἡγούμενος καὶ ἀρχιερεὺς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*; the date of composition would then fall about Sept. 18th, 141 B. C. Similarly Grætz thinks the note in the Syriac Version deserves notice, i. e. that this Psalm refers to the high-priest Joshua, who oppressed his former colleague Zerubbabel; he might have been charged with haughtiness and arrogance, so he calls God to witness that he is free from pride and does not strive after extraordinary things.

These commentators overlook the fact that the poet speaks, not of what has been received unsought, but of resignation to the loss of what was once a possession (v. 2); this seems to indicate that the spirit in which v. 1 is spoken is not that of a man who deprecates an honor unexpectedly offered, but of one who does not aspire to attain what present circumstances will not permit him to gain; deprived of a blessing formerly enjoyed, so far from attempting to recover it, he has forced himself to be content with his new fortunes.

* Cf. Ps. 145:3, 5; Col. 2:18.

To whatever other historical occasion the language may be applicable, and however aptly it may be taken as recording the experience of an individual soul, its fitness as a description of the situation in Jerusalem in the days of Nehemiah is clear. The Jews had lost their national independence and were unable to regain it. Now the necessity for such a solemn asseveration as that in v. 2 can only have been brought about by the very possible liability to damage of some sort accruing from grave charges of discontent and ambition, preferred by such persons, and in such a quarter, that it seemed a denial must be made, or mischief would result. So it would appear, in reply to the accusations made and to the rumors current among the neighboring tribes* (cf. Neh. 3:34; 6:5 sqq.), the Jews say they are not inclined to revolt, they have no great schemes in their minds looking to the re-establishment of their independence,† but, on the contrary, are willing to take a solemn oath that they will remain in peaceful subjection to the will of God, under Persian rule.

In form the fragment (with the exception of v. 3, which appears to be a later addition) consists of two verses in antithetic parallelism, the former stating negatively facts, the positive side of which is set forth in the latter. A most striking feature is the strength of expression.

(1) According to the interpretation usually given, the two parallel phrases, with which the Psalm begins, convey the notion of spiritual pride exhibiting itself in haughty demeanor and contemptuous looks; cf. Prov. 30:3: **דור מה רמו עיניו ועפעפיו ינשאו** *There is a generation—how lofty are their eyes, and their eyelashes are lifted up!* But this idea of superciliousness and assumed authority is not in close connection with the thought in the second hemistich, since the logical complement would be: *nor have I despised and oppressed the humble and lowly* (cf. Ps. 10:2). As Hengstenberg says, pride, in particular the sort accompanied by a contemptuous depreciation of other men, is often the result of personal success; there is, however, no suggestion of any such good fortune here; on the contrary, the speaker affirms that he has actually suffered loss (v. 2).

The connotation of lofty looks is pride; cf. Ps. 101:5: **גבה עינים ורחב לבב אתו לא אוכל** *A proud look and a haughty heart—I cannot endure it*; Isa. 2:11, 17; Prov. 6:17; Ps. 18:28; and also *to be high*, said of the heart, means to be haughty; cf. Prov. 16:18: **לפני שבר גאון ולפני כשלק גבה רוח** *Before destruction there is pride, and a haughty spirit precedes a fall*; Prov. 18:12; 2 Chron. 32:26. But the sort of pride meant here is readily determined when the relation of the two hemistichs is considered; the poet describes first

* So Rosenmüller.

† The ideal of the post-exilic scribes was to abandon all political schemes and to devote themselves solely to carrying out the precepts of the Law. Cf. W. R. Smith, *Old Test. in the Jewish Church*, 1892, p. 45.

his disposition, then his behavior, first habits of thought, then habits of action; *out of the heart*, as the poet recognizes, *are the issues of life* (Prov. 4:23), and so from the feelings disclaimed originate impulses to pursue the course of action avoided. If, then, the declaration is made that certain feelings are absent from the heart, coupled with confirmatory evidence of this fact in that no attempt is made to accomplish impossible schemes, it involves simply a process of reasoning to discover the nature of the feelings in question. No such special meaning as pride of birth or station (Del., Langer) is justified by the context. The principal thought of the verse is the dethronement of arrogant ambition which, refusing to be moderated by reason and common sense, will not be restrained within the bounds of possibility, but trains the eye to look for the realization of unfounded expectations. It is the self-sufficient pride of ambition that causes a person to venture indiscreetly beyond his depth;* cf. Isa. 37:23 sq. Those whose condition is described here would not be guilty of such a mistake. Their attention is not directed to secure the consummation of aspiring hopes such that men, who consider wisely the present state of affairs, would stamp as arrogant folly.

Grætz thinks גדלות here means *honor* or *dignity*, and that the allusion is to some position of power and authority; this seems an unwarranted restriction of the application of the word, which extends over much the same ground as the following phrase, and has the same import as in Jer. 45:5: ואתה תבקש לך And if thou wouldst seek for thyself great things—do not seek them, i. e. the accomplishment of large plans with a view to gaining important results; Jer. 33:3. נפלאות means not *too wonderful* (Hgsth., Ewald) which would give the idea of something beyond comprehension; cf. Job 42:3: Wherefore I have uttered what I did not understand, נפלאות ממני ולא אדע things too hard for me to know; but rather *too difficult*, unattainable things (Del., Bickell, et al.); cf. Gen. 18:4: היפלא מיהוה דבר Is anything too hard for God? Deut. 30:11; 17:8; Zech. 8:6.

The thought of the verse is therefore: ambition does not induce my mind to devise great schemes, since this would be the extreme of folly, for I am incapable of accomplishing them.

(2) The author now outlines the positive side of the character he is describing. The form of the statement first demands attention. Some translators (LXX., Vulgate and Luther) have misunderstood the verse as containing within itself both protasis and apodosis of a conditional clause. But, as most commentators have recognized, the formula is that of the oath; cf. 1 Sam. 3:17: כה יעשה כה יעשה לך אלהים וכה יוסף אם תחכר ממני דבר May God do so to thee and more also if thou concealest anything from me; 1 Sam. 20:13; 2 Kgs. 6:31; 1 Sam.

* Cf. Shakspeare's *King Henry VIII.*, Act III., Sc. 2, in Wolsey's speech: "I have ventured, like little wanton boys that swim on bladders," etc.

14:44; 2 Sam. 3:9, 35; 1 Kgs. 2:23; Ruth 1:17. Though the imprecation itself, the unpleasant part of the oath, is omitted, its presence is implied, and the expression is still felt, not simply as an emphatic declaration, but as an actual oath; cf. the following passages where the verb *swear* is used: Ps. 95:10, 11: *For forty years I loathed the generation, and I said: a people of an erring heart are they and they know not my ways*; אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְּאִפִּי אִם יֵאָחֵז אֵל מִנְּחֹתַי *of whom I swore in my wrath: If they enter into my rest—*; Deut. 1:34 sq.; Isa. 14:24; Ps. 132:2 sqq. The aposiopesis is to be noted in the midst of an address where no external sign of the presence of an oath can be seen; cf. Isa. 22:14: *And JHVH Sebaoth made a revelation to me (saying): אִם יִכְפַּר הָעוֹן הַזֶּה לָכֶם עַד תָּמֹתָן* *if this iniquity be purged from you till you die—*; Job 1:11; 2:5; Jer. 22:6; Job 17:2; Ps. 27:13. The nature of the imprecations implied may be inferred from the context; so here: If I have not quieted my soul, may God, to whom I appeal, condemn and punish me!

Calmed, literally *made even* or *smooth*, as the waters of a troubled sea subside: in Isa. 28:25, the word is used of preparing the soil for the seed.

The mind is not puffed up with ambitious desires, for all the great longings after what is impossible have been suppressed and the turbulent appetites brought into subjection; so that the spirit now rests in quiet like a weaned child in the mother's arms. Some exegetes, disregarding the idea conveyed by *weaned*, think the reference here is to dependence: *as an infant helplessly depends on the mother, so I on the Lord*; others explain the words as meaning: *as a child is quiet when clinging to the parent, so I, clinging to JHVH, rest tranquilly*. Hengstenberg thinks the point of comparison is the modest humility of the child; cf. Matt. 18:34; the Psalmist is content to wait until God is pleased to give what he wants; similarly Coccejus and Venema gave explanation. But (as noticed by Clarisse and Rosenm.) this interpretation contradicts the meaning of the terms employed. There is no reason to take נִמְלֵךְ in the sense of an infant still possessed of a suckling's appetite; יוֹנֵק *suckling* must then have been used; but the word means simply an actually weaned child; cf. Isa. 28:9: *Whom will he teach knowledge, and whom will he cause to understand the message?* נִמְלֵךְ מִחֶלֶב עֵתִיקִי מִשְׁדִּים *Those weaned from milk and removed from the breasts*; Isa. 11:2; 1 Sam. 1:23; Hos. 1:8. There is no suggestion that emphasis is to be laid on the gradual process of weaning; but rather on the fact that the work is completed. The child may lie upon the very bosom whence it was wont to derive nourishment, but it no longer restlessly craves the breast; reconciled to the loss, it has become content with present arrangements. Hence the *tertium comparationis* is: *reconciliation to the deprivation of something of value and importance and contentment with the present lot*; there is no prospect of recovering what has been lost, nor is there any wish for it. Exegetes who refer the Psalm to David, Hezekiah, Joshua or Simon the Macca-

bee, have missed this point; but the whole piece seems to obtain most fitting explanation when regarded as expressing the feelings of the sensible portion of the congregation in the days of Nehemiah. Jewish national independence was ruined when Jerusalem fell in 586; the national spirit, kept alive by faith during the Exile, was roused to new vigor by the cheering influence of the Return, and many expected to see Judah take her place among the nations. But as years passed without bringing the great revolution expected, it became patent to thinking minds that the Jews could maintain a collective existence only as a religious body, not as an independent civil organization; all idea of the latter must be given up. The occasion of replying to charges made by enemies of the congregation, gave opportunity for the public declaration of this fact. Hence it is said: We are not guilty of arrogant ambition, nor, unmindful of our feeble condition, have we any purpose to pit our weakness against the power of the Persian Empire; but we have schooled ourselves to accept our present circumstances as the inevitable and now rest contented.

The Jews do not want anything from the Persian government, but are content to remain under the protection of the mother city, from which they went out as a colony.

As a weaned child is my soul within me. Some regard this repetition as in accord with the degree-like construction (Hupf.). Grætz, following the Greek versions, would emend to read: "כִּן גַּמ' וְגַר", when the clause would stand as the apodosis of the oath formula: *If I have not quieted . . . , so may it be repaid upon my soul.* Others (Del., Ewald, Clarisse, Rosenm, Hupf.) think the words *as a weaned child upon the mother* are to be connected with this clause, thus: *As a weaned child on its mother, so the weaned one in me, my soul*; but if so, then the text should read כִּן גַּמּוּלָה. Delitzsch translates: *Like a weaned child with its mother, Like the weaned child is my soul with me*, i. e. "as a weaned child is his soul in relation to his Ego"; and he thinks it is an example of the "ladder-like construction." But the clause actually spoils the literary form of the piece, which is otherwise written entirely in accord with the scheme of the *Kinah-Strophe*.* The words seem to be a marginal gloss appended to indicate the *tertium comparationis*; Bickell, in his metrical rendering of the Psalm, very properly omits them.

V. 3 in the Masoretic text, has no connection with the argument of the Psalm, though it has been explained as an address of commendation and encouragement to the congregation from the high-priest, or a priestly choir (Olsh., Grætz). In any case, it presupposes that vv. 1:2 voice the feelings of the people, not of an individual; otherwise it is a "strange addition" (de Wette). Those who regard the piece as originally composed with reference to some person's personal experi-

* Cf. C. Budde's Article in the *Zeitschr. für Alttestamentl. Wissenschaft*, II, p. 42.

ences, think that by means of this apostrophe it was adapted to the uses of the community (Clarisse). The supposition seems quite probable, that the formula was added when the Song found a place in the temple hymn-book; and it appears to have been taken from Ps. 130, which stood close at hand; cf. Ps. 130:8, notes.

Notes on Ps. 129.

Ps. 129 is first a hymn of thanksgiving for the deliverance of Israel from oppressors (v. 1 sqq.), then a prayer that the divine Guardian may continue his watch-care over the chosen people, while the ungodly heathen are swept from the face of the earth. The present situation is one of comparative freedom, but, it appears, the people are still exposed to the assaults of enemies.

That the Psalm is of post-exilic origin is generally admitted. Hitzig and Olshausen think that the contents point to Maccabean times, and the former fixes the date as shortly after the capture of the castle in Jerusalem by Simon in May, 142 B. C. (cf. 1 Macc. 13:51 sqq.), i. e. in the harvest season; hence the figure in vs. 7, 8. But this reference is by no means necessary; the close parallelism with Ps. 124, which, as has been shown, is best explained as a product of the Return, argues an origin in the same period. Both Psalms ascribe Israel's salvation to divine interference, and in both figures of captivity are employed to picture the state from which the people have escaped. The language of Ps. 129 is of more general application than that of 124; for while the latter treats of a single epoch of distress from the gloomy beginning to the happy end, Ps. 129 compresses within the brief space of four verses an epitome of the national history from the dawn in the Egyptian house of bondage, through centuries of persecution, through national disasters and the night of captivity, to the morning of freedom, when, with bright anticipations, the congregation faces a future fair with promise.

One purpose of the Song, i. e. encouragement, is contained in the idea to be supplied as a connecting link between the two stanzas, viz.: JHVVH will direct and care for the fortunes of Israel in the future as he has done in the past. Enemies of the religion of Israel, who may do harm, are at hand; upon them, as upon all adversaries of Judaism, the curse of God is invoked.

Thus it appears that the historical situation may be found in the era of the Return. The allusions to enemies indicate that it was composed later than Ps. 124; not, however, in the gloomy period succeeding Ezra's unsuccessful attempt to reorganize the community on the basis of the Law, but when public confidence had been restored by the successes of Nehemiah.

(1, 2) The *terminus a quo* of the period alluded to is rightly declared to be the captivity in Egypt. Israel was conceived of as a virgin to whom youth might be ascribed; cf. Ezek. 16:23; Jer. 18:18; 31:4, 18; or, as a boy, JHVVH's son; Hos. 11:1: *כי נער ישראל ואהבהו וממצרים קראתי לבני* When Israel was a

child I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt ; cf. Exod. 4:22 ; Jer. 31:20 ; similarly in other places the sojourn in Egypt is definitely referred to as the period of Israel's youth ; Ezek. 23:3 ; 23:19 ; Jer. 2:2 ; 3:25 ; 22:21 ; 32:30 ; Isa. 46:4 ; Hos. 2:17.

The formula of address is an exhortation to join heartily in the thanksgiving for the mercies experienced. The repetition (in v. 2) emphasizes the idea of violent, unintermitted persecutions which for centuries had been inflicted on Israel. In antithesis to the recital of woes, the adversative particle *nevertheless* introduces the glad thought of endurance through all the storm of affliction ; the repeated attempts of the oppressors to procure Israel's ruin have failed to gain a permanent success ; the people has not been utterly subdued.

(3) The meaning is disputed. Many incline to take the words figuratively as referring to severe, merciless scourging ; the *furrows* are the long stripes or welts on the back of the virgin (i. e. Israel) now in a state of servitude ;* and the phrase *made long their furrows* is supposed to denote oft-repeated or prolonged application of the whip as well as the length of the wounds ; so in Egypt the taskmasters compelled the Hebrews to work under the lash ; cf. Exod. 1:13, 14 ; 3:7 etc. But parallel passages to prove this view correct are wanting ; those quoted in support of it do not refer to scourging ; e. g. Am. 1:3 : *Thus saith JHVH, for three transgressions of Damascus and for four, I will not restore it, על דרשם בחרצות הכרז את הגלעד* because they have threshed Gilead with sharp instruments of iron ; Hab. 3:12 ; Isa. 41:15 ; Jer. 51:33 ; Mic. 4:13 ; 2 Kgs. 18:7. The allusion in these passages is to subjugation, and even annihilation, by the unsparing iron hand of military power ; and so it is here. The picture is that of the nation prostrate in defeat, exposed to the merciless treatment of the foe ; cf. Isa. 51:23 : *ושמתי ביד מוניך אשר אמרו לנפשך שחי ונעברה ותשימי כארץ גוך וכחוצ לעברים* But I will put it (i. e., the cup of my fury) in the hand of them that afflict thee, who said to thy soul : bow down that we may pass over ; and thou didst place thy body as the ground and as the street to those who went over. Israel was made the highway over which the enemy passed.

In the light of the history of Western Asia, the passage becomes clear and simple. The battle-ground in the struggle between the two great rival powers of the Nile and the Euphrates lay in the intermediate provinces of Syria and Palestine.† The acquisition of this territory by either was a menace to the existence of the other ; to Egypt it might be a bulwark against her Eastern foe, to Assyria the gateway to the treasures in the rich cities of the Nile valley. Through this

* Agellius (quoted by Rosenm.) supposed that the words refer to smiths who lengthen out the metal by hammering it ; so the Egyptians cut the Hebrews with scourges as though they were pounding on iron.

† Cf. the paper of Dr. Cyrus Adler, *Ancient Eastern Politics in Johns Hopkins University Circulars*, July 1894, pp. 116 sq.

district passed the great caravan routes connecting the extremes of the Oriental World, and which, leading to the seaport-towns on the Mediterranean coast, were the arteries through which flowed trade and prosperity to the nation whose military power was sufficient to divert the benefits to itself. Hence, for commercial reasons as well as strategic purposes, the possession of this territory was a matter of prime importance; and so the contest was waged over it again and again. The smaller nationalities that had their seats here might for a time, under the protection of defences provided by nature, maintain their independence; but sooner or later, the alternative presented itself of choosing either Egypt or Assyria as lord. In this situation was Israel; submission to the invading armies was always either voluntary or forced; and, not content with free passage, the enemy subjugated the country in order to secure it; Palestine was considered as a field that might be cultivated for their own benefit without regard to the fate of the nation of Israel; just as a plough breaks up the soil that it may be ready for the ploughman's use, so the oppressors broke up the independence of Judah that it might no longer remain as an obstacle to hinder the realization of their desires. The figure might even have literal application and refer to the utter destruction of cities; cf. Jer. 26:18: *Micha the Morashtite was prophesying in the days of Hezekiah, the king of Judah, and he spoke to all the people of Judah, saying: אכר יהוה צבאות ציון שדה תחרש וירושלים עיים תהיה והר הבית יער לכמות יער* thus saith JHVH Sebaoth, Zion will be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem become heaps and the mountain of the temple a desolate hill;* Mic. 3:12. It seems better, however, to take the words as alluding to the frequent invasions, the expeditions and counter expeditions, all of which were ruinous to Palestine. *They made long their furrows; traces of the mischief done could be seen for centuries.*

(4) By some the figure is thought to refer to hostile dominion; the *cords* are chains or fetters, emblems of the subject's relation to the dominant power (Hgstb.); cf. Ps. 2:3: *ננתקה את מוסרותינו ונשליכה ממנו עבותינו* *Let us break asunder their fetters, and cast off from us their cords.* Others think of slavery, a condition of servitude and captivity (de Wette, Hupf., Olsh.). It seems much better, however, to consider the expression as an element of the figure drawn from agriculture which begins in v. 3; the *cords* are those attached to the yoke, i. e. the reins or traces; cf. Job. 39:10: *התקשר רים בתלם עבתו* *Canst thou bind the wild bull with the cord in the furrow?* There is no point in Hupfeld's objection that the people represent not the oxen drawing the plough, but the field; the country is especially meant in v. 3; here it is the people themselves. The

* Cf. also the common expression in the Assyrian historical inscriptions, used when speaking of the demolition of cities: *ana tili u Karmi utêr*, "I turned it into a heap of ruins and cultivated ground." Cf. the Prism-Inscription of Tiglath Pileser I (c. 1110 B. C.), col. III. l. 84; vid. W. Lotz, *Die Inschriften Tiglath-Pileser's I*, Leipzig 1880, pp. 32, 138.

country suffered because the inhabitants had to serve the pleasure of their enemies; with the removal of the foreign yoke the cruel ploughing ceases. The *lot of the righteous* (cf. 125:3) was, to the foe, a field that might be tilled for his benefit; the people kept in the bondage of tribute were as the creatures that draw the plough, merely beasts of burden; cf. Lev. 26:18: *I am JHVH, your God, who brought you forth from the land of Egypt that you should not be servants to them, and I brake the bands of your yoke and made you walk erect*; Ezek. 34:27; Isa. 9:3; 10:27; 14:25; 47:6; Jer. 28:14; 30:8.

JHVH, the covenant-keeping guardian of his people's interests, has cut in twain the cords and Israel has experienced relief. With this declaration the narrative reaches its *terminus ad quem* in the present; obviously, the story of release has reference to an important event yet fresh in the minds of the people. Israel's enemies have inflicted much distress, but have not wrought a permanent disaster; for now God has broken the yoke of Babylonian bondage, and the Jews are no longer beasts of burden, but men, breathing the sweet air of liberty in the land of their fathers.

(5) From the contemplation of the wonderful past, the poet turns to the future. Inspired with hope and confidence, he prays that God may continue to work for Israel by removing all who manifest hostility to the true faith. There underlies the words of this stanza an implied exhortation to confidence: learn the lesson taught by history that in JHVH is salvation; therefore let us hope he will destroy all who are inimical to us.

The verbs stand first for the sake of emphasis as in Ps. 6:11: **יִשְׁנוּ וִיבְהִלּוּ מֵאֵד כָּל אֹיְבֵי** *Let them be discomfited and utterly ruined, all my enemies.* The *haters of Zion* are all the adversaries of the Jewish religion (Langer, Del.), for an attack on the church was an attack on the people. From this time on much of the trouble and persecution inflicted on the Jews was in consequence of their religious belief and practices. In particular their neighbors gave proof of annoyance at the policy of exclusivism by bringing into play every means to subvert the work of reconstructing the state. The phrase here embraces all enemies, those now existing and those yet to come.

(6) The roofs of many houses in the Orient were constructed in the following way: pieces of timber were laid across from wall to wall to serve as rafters; upon these were placed smaller sticks and brush and over the whole was spread thick mud or clay, which was rolled or pressed to make it firm. Upon the surface of this structure, moistened by the rain, blades of grass would quickly appear, but the fierce heat of the sun soon dried up the mud and, lacking root and moisture, the grass wilted and died.

The only difficulty which the verse presents attaches to the verb in the second hemistich. **שָׁלַף** is employed elsewhere in the Old Testament only

in a transitive sense; of drawing a sword, 1 Sam. 17:51; Judg. 8:10; of pulling a weapon from a wound, Judg. 3:22; Job 20:25; of removing a shoe, Ruth 4:7. Hence the LXX., Vulgate, Theodotion and some modern exegetes (Clarisse, de Wette, Hgstb., Olsh.) have conceived that the allusion is to the plucking up of the grass, either in weeding, or in gathering it for provender. But this grass is not usually weeded out, nor can it produce hay; so that the rendering *pluck* is pointless. The *tertium comparationis* here, as in so many other passages where the figure of withering grass is employed, is transitoriness; cf. Isa. 40:6-8; Pss. 37:2; 103:15, 16; 90:5; and especially Isa. 37:26, 27 (=2 Kgs. 19:25, 26): *Hast thou not heard how long ago I did it, and of ancient times I performed it? Now I have brought it about that thou shouldest be for laying waste fortified cities so that they become ruined heaps; their inhabitants were powerless, dismayed and discomfited, they became as the grass of the field and the green herb, as the grass of the house tops, and a blasting (of vegetation) before it has grown up.* The idea of a premature end underlies these comparisons, and the same is true of v. 6. So that the ancient Versions (Targum, Aquila, Symmachus) which several modern exegetes (Hitz., Hupf., Kamph., Cheyne) have sensibly followed, appear to be justified in taking the verb in an intransitive sense, with *grass* as subject. In its original signification *לש* = *to unsheath*; so here, intransitively, it is very properly said of the grass, *to unsheath itself*, to come forth from its bracteal covering. This then gives most excellent sense: may they be like the grass on the flat clay-roofs which, suddenly appearing after a shower, as suddenly withers under the fierce heat of the sun before it has time to develop, to put forth stalk, or to produce blossoms; there is no deep root,* nor can a supply of moisture be obtained from the baked mud, hence the destruction of the plant is inevitable; it leaves no seed, hence the reproduction of its kind is cut off. May such be the fate of Israel's enemies; destitute of real foundation, having no access to sources whence sustenance may be derived, exposed to the constant assault of pitiless forces of evil, may their ruin be complete, may they utterly vanish from the face of the earth.

(7) As the sun-scorched blades of grass are useless, yielding naught that the harvesters may gather, so may nations hostile to Zion play no part in the history of the world, may they leave nothing to posterity,† may no people reap any fruit from them.

(8) According to the traditional explanation this verse represents the exchange of greetings between the reapers and the passers-by; some, however, explain the second hemistich as a parallel repetition of the first,‡ or else a circumlocution expressing the same thought (Qamchi, de Wette, Kamph., Olsh.). The

* Cf. Matt. 13:5, 6; Mark 4:3; Luke 8:6.

† Thus Israel left religion as a heritage to the world, Greece art, Rome law.

‡ Cf. Wellhausen, *Israelitische u. Juedische Geschichte*, p. 164.

idea is suggested by the allusions to the harvest field in vs. 6, 7, and a superficial likeness between the phrases here and those in Ruth 2:4: *And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem and said to the reapers: יהוה עמכם ויאמרו לו יברכך יהוה JHVH be with you; and they said to him: may JHVH bless thee.* But the formulæ are not the same; and further, the fact must not be overlooked that this strophe is spoken with reference to the hostile peoples, and that the words in v. 8 are not addressed to the reapers, but describe the disposition and feelings of others toward the enemies of Zion, who represent not the harvesters but the worthless withered grass. The passers-by, i. e. other nations, and future generations of men, are the reapers, those who would naturally expect to receive from sister-peoples, from their predecessors on the stage of national existence, some fruit of experience or knowledge, some heritage of literature, institutions or civilization. Such an inheritance, the poet prays, may Zion's enemies not bequeath to the world; may sudden destruction cut off the possibility of producing anything that will be of use to mankind. The words in v. 8 must refer to something that takes place after the fall of the nations; they express the sentiments of those who contemplate the swift ruin and utter annihilation of those who dared to oppose the Jews; cf. Jer. 18:16: לשום ארצם לשמה שריקת עולם כל עובר עליה ישם ויניד בראשו *To make their land desolation, a perpetual hissing; every one that passes by it will be amazed, and will wag his head;* Jer. 19:8; Zeph. 2:15; Lam. 1:12; 2:15. Instead of words of sympathy and regret, imprecations will fall from the lips of those who gaze upon the ruin of the once proud states; there will be no such kindly farewell as *requiescat in pace*, but the relegation of the name to infamy and reproach. These nations will not have a *nomen perenne per annos*; no one will have grateful remembrance of them. Unblest, unwept, driven suddenly from the stage of history, leaving nothing behind of good to the world, the haters of Zion come to an end.

The second hemistich cannot be the reply of those concerning whom the first is spoken; for they no longer exist. Nor are the members parallel; for parallelism would demand either a verb with a negative, or the positive statement of a curse. But the hemistich may be the expression of an antithesis which has to be supplied mentally in connection with the statements in the preceding verses: the haters of Zion perish, but Israel will flourish; as the soil broken up by the plough becomes more productive, so all the persecutions of Israel will contribute to the people's good. This antithesis would be clearly brought out in the antiphonal rendition of the Psalm by the temple choirs (Grätz). But it would seem that this liturgical formula did not belong to the Psalm as originally composed; the author's plan provided for an antithesis between strophes: he shows (a) the endurance of Israel through persecution, (b) the evanescent character of the enemy's existence. So the second strophe is virtually closed with 8*. Why then

the addition of 8^b? It is due, it seems, to a superstitious fear which would not allow that a piece, especially when rendered in public, should end with a curse or with words that suggested evil. This demand for a propitious conclusion has brought it about that in the case of the so-called יתקן (Isaiah, the Twelve Minor Prophets, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations), when these books are read in the synagogues, the reader repeats at the close the last verse but one (or the second from the last) in order that the final utterance may not be something unpleasant or ill-omened. Similarly here, the formula of priestly blessing turns the thought away from the untimely fate of the haters of Zion to the happiness of Israel, rejoicing in JHVH'S blessing. Cf. the notes on 128:6 and 125:5; also Ps. 27:14.

Notes on Ps. 125.

The assertion that JHVH is constantly guarding the interests of his people is but another form of exhortation to faith and trust, and implies the existence of distressing influences that tend to destroy confidence in God and give an excuse for heresy. The situation, of which these influences are the outcome, is declared to be that of subjection to the rule of the heathen. Finally, two classes of persons are contrasted, the first being composed of faithful believers while the latter is made up of those who have quitted the path of orthodoxy, i. e. heretics, whose fate will be that of a third class, the workers of iniquity or non-Jews. The Psalm must therefore be referred to a time when a foreign power was dominant in Palestine, and when the members of the congregation were separating into two factions, one party preserving strict orthodoxy while the other was disinclined to exact observance of the Law. In view of these facts, of the emphasis laid upon allegiance to the Law and of the strong church-feeling manifest in the Psalm, the period of composition must be sought in post-exilic times; and here none fit so well as the times of Nehemiah. To be sure, the earlier part of the Maccabean epoch presents some very similar circumstances and conditions, and for this reason the Song might be assigned to the times of Judas when, by his capture of Jerusalem, 165 B. C., hopes were awakened, that the rod of Syrian rule would ere long be removed from the land (Hitzig). But it is a justifiable inference from the language of the Psalm that Jerusalem, as well as the country, is still subject to the foreign power; and also, if the piece was written previous to 165, but within the Maccabean age, the absence of allusion to the recent crushing calamities and the bright cheerful tone of the opening section remain to be accounted for.

It appears, then, that the Psalm belongs to the time of Nehemiah's activity (so Rosenm., Grætz). In purpose the piece resembles Ps. 128; it was intended to stimulate the Jews to faith, but especially to induce conformity to the Law; not only, however, is the promise of blessings employed as a means to secure this end, but also the threat of punishment for heresy is used to arouse the indifferent and careless. Clearly loose practices, due in part to external influences,

were prevalent: and as Ps. 128 fits best the situation in 444 when the Law was promulgated and accepted, so this poem should, it seems, be assigned to the time when Nehemiah's term of office was renewed, about 481; a reaction had in the meanwhile set in, and the requirements of the Law were being disregarded.

(1) Mention of any other mountain would have served to bring out the *tertium comparationis*; but Mt. Zion is named because it was the external seat of the church (Hgstb.), the holy hill of JHVH. The mountain is never shaken so that its characteristic firmness and stability become lost, but remains fixed, upright in its position; so too, those who trust in JHVH, the true adherents of the Jewish religion, will endure firm in their faith. Everything on Mt. Zion might be destroyed, the temple itself utterly swept away, but the hill would still stand; so the faith of Israel, though subjected to fierce storms of war, bitter persecutions and grave national disasters, continues steadfast because centered on the eternal rock, the living God; cf. Ps. 18:3; 92:16; 62:3.

(2) Many exegetes explain this verse as the picture of a city surrounded by protecting walls, some considering that the mountains themselves form a natural bulwark of defence against besieging armies. This idea seems quite natural since Jerusalem is girt about by high hills which shut it in like a wall; but the difficulties of approach could be overcome, and had been overcome before this Psalm was written. So that the point of comparison cannot, it would appear, be the idea of defence, but is rather that of unfailing presence, of constant association: the everlasting hills always stand about the city, Jerusalem and her mountains belong together, so JHVH is ever with his people. But while the hills are simply passive spectators of the varied fortunes of the place, God is deeply interested in the welfare of his people, and his presence is the synonym of protecting care; cf. Ps. 34:8; Zech. 2:9.

It is to be observed that here, as elsewhere in these Psalms, the religious side of life, the importance of firm adherence to the true religion is emphasized. None the less clear and important is the side thought connected with vs. 1, 2, that though the national existence and independence of the Jews may have been destroyed, the ideal side of Judaism, the religious ideas, cannot be destroyed; this fact is also brought out in the following verses.

(3) The proof of JHVH's unfailing goodness to Israel is to be shown (1) in release from evil influences, (2) in the divine blessing that descends on the truly upright, and (3) in the removal of the heretical.

The rod or scepter is the symbol of power and authority; cf. Ps. 2:9;
תִּרְעֵם בַּרְזֵל כְּכֵלִי יוֹצֵר תַּנְפָּצִים *Thou wilt break them with a rod of iron, thou wilt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel*; * Gen. 49:10; Num.

* Cf. the Assyrian phrase: *Kima xaqbâti udaqququ* "he broke (the lands) in pieces like pots;" vid. H. Winckler, *Die Keilschrifttexte Sargons*, Leipzig, 1889, Die Inschrift auf der Rückseite der Platten, l. 10.

24:17, 19; Zech. 10:11; it also denotes oppressive, cruel rule; cf. Isa. 14:5; שבר יהוה מטה רשעים שבט משלים JHVH has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of rulers; Isa. 9:3.

The wicked are non-Jews, who were capital examples of wickedness since they did not acknowledge JHVH; cf. Ps. 79:6; שפך חמתך על הגוים. אשר לא ידעך ועל ממלכות אשר בשמך לא קראו. Pour out thy wrath on the heathen that do not recognize thee, and on the kingdoms that do not call on thy name; Ps. 9:18; 129:4; 9:6. On the other hand the righteous are those whose ways are approved by God, the orthodox members of the congregation; cf. Ps. 1:6. כי יודע יהוה דרך צדיקים. For JHVH approves the way of the righteous. The lot of the righteous is equivalent to the heritage of Israel (Judg. 20:6; Ezek. 35:15; Ps. 61:6), i. e. the Holy Land; the expression doubtless contains a reference to the apportionment of the territory by lot; cf. Judg. cc. 1-3, and Josh. cc. 13 sqq. גורל is the exact equivalent of the English lot, a parcel or portion of ground.

Closely following upon the thoughts suggested by v. 2, that the protecting presence of JHVH is ever abiding around his people, comes the consideration of the contradiction to this assurance which the present state of affairs presents: If God be with us, how comes it that we are still subject to heathen rulers? In answer to this objection the poet, confident that JHVH's salvation is nigh to them that fear him (Ps. 85:10), declares his belief that this state of things will not last, but that the heathen rule will ere long be removed in order to promote the purity of the religion. The wickedness feared from contact and association with the ungodly is not so much the service of false gods, but rather defection from the party seeking the interests of the oppressed congregation (Hupf.); in consequence of this there would follow disregard of the law, and other departures from the path of orthodoxy.

(4.5) The good or, as the parallel expression puts it, the upright in heart, are Jews true to their religion; cf. Ps. 36:11; 64:11; 94:15; 97:11; 11:2; 32:11. The difference in form from the ordinary phrase (ישרים) בלבנותם alongside of (ישרי לב) is due perhaps to the desire to lay emphasis upon religion of the heart, to make prominent the requirement of internal righteousness as opposed to mere outward conformity to the Law (Hupf., Olsh.). Directly the opposite of this class are those who turn aside to walk in crooked ways. The straight highway is the pure religion; cf. Ps. 44:19: לא נסוג אחור לבנו ותט אשרנו מני אררך. Our heart has not turned back, nor have our steps turned aside from thy way; Deut. 9:16; Ps. 37:34; 5:8; Mal. 2:8, 9; Ps. 119:1. Those that turn aside unto their crooked ways are Jews who, though once orthodox, have allowed themselves to be led away, and now neglect the duties imposed by the Law and do not hesitate to do what it forbids; thus when Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem he found that the tithes

were not being paid, the Sabbath was being broken, while the law prohibiting intermarriage with the heathen had been disregarded and even priests had violated their covenants.*

The workers of iniquity is a term synonymous with *wicked*. There are but two great classes in the congregation, the orthodox and the heretical. The latter party will be classed with the unmistakably wicked men who do not so much as make a profession of serving JH^VH, and concerning whose sins and the consequent judgment of divine wrath there can be no doubt, i. e. the heathen (Ewald, deWette, Hitz.) mentioned in v. 3; cf. Ps. 14:4; 28:3; 36:12 sq.

Here, as in Ps. 120:4, the *lex talionis* is the principle upon which the disposition of rewards and punishments is to be based; the righteous adherents to the true faith may expect blessings from God, while the heretical, who walk in the crooked by-ways of their own liberal views, instead of allowing themselves to be guided by the Law, will fall into the same destruction that awaits the heathen. The highest good that can be bestowed on the upright in heart is the removal of strangers, freedom from evil associations, and, to this end, deliverance from foreign oppressors; on the other hand, the greatest evil that can befall Jews who are careless in their observance of God's statutes, is to be cut off from the congregation, to be numbered with the heathen and so to share their fate. There comes out here the principle of exclusivism which Nehemiah put into such vigorous practice on the occasion of his second visit.

(5^b) Concerning these words a slight difference of opinion prevails. Delitzsch pictures the poet with uplifted hands bestowing in priestly manner the blessing upon the congregation. Others (Grätz) regard the phrase as a liturgical formula; cf. 128:6; 129:8. It stands in strong opposition to the preceding statement and may have arisen from unwillingness to end the Psalm with the words of a curse; or what is more likely, it is an emphatic reiteration of v. 4. With the stability of faith, the sustaining presence of God, the removal of foreign oppression and of heretical elements from the community, the blessing of peace must ensue. This peace is the end of tyranny, hostility, disunion, unrest; peace is freedom, harmony, unity, safety and happiness (Langer); cf. Ps. 119:165: **שלום רב** לאהבי תורתך ואין למו למכשול *They that love thy Law have abundant peace, and have no occasion to fall.*

Notes on Ps. 134.

This short Song seems well adapted to form the conclusion of the little Psalter, the name of which it bears. The contents—an exhortation to praise JH^VH followed by an invocation of the divine blessing—are somewhat similar to

* E. g. the renegade priest Manasseh, Eliashib's grandson, who had married the daughter of Sanballat (Neh. 13:28), and who joined the Samaritan community. Cf. H. E. Ryle, *Canon of the Old Testament*, 1862, p. 92.

those of the doxologies which close the Book of Psalms; and it is quite possible that the Psalm owes its present position to this consideration.

It is an antiphony; the exhortation (vs. 1, 2) seems to be addressed to those who carry on the services in the temple; these respond with the formula of priestly blessing; from this it would appear that v. 3 was intended to be spoken by the priests, while vs. 1 and 2 contain the words of the congregation or its representative. The piece may therefore have been employed on some special occasion, or at some particular part of the service in the sanctuary. Some commentators, who hold to the theory of *Songs of Feast-Journeys*, suppose that the pilgrims, assembled in the temple at the time of the evening sacrifice, exhort the congregation (so Hgstb.), or the priests and Levites (so Bæthgen), to praise God, whereupon the priests reply with the benediction. More convincing evidence to prove the theory with reference to the other Songs must first be brought forward before this explanation can claim acceptance. The majority of commentators think of Levites watching in the temple at night, and take vs. 1 and 2 either as the address of an individual to his companions on guard, or as the greeting with which, at the change of the watches, the retiring party meets those coming on duty; this seems an unfounded conjecture, for, as Olshausen has observed, the Psalm was probably purposed to introduce the chanting of hymns, and must therefore have had a place in the public worship. The idea of Grætz appears then not inapt: on the basis of a Talmudic tradition* he argues that the Psalm was composed for use at the time when, in the nights of the Feasts of Booths, the services were varied with song in order to heighten the joy at the libation of water—perhaps therefore at the time of the Hasmonean queen Salome-Alexandra (circa 78—69 B. C.). There can be no doubt that the Psalms were employed in the services of the temple; and the tradition may be correct in so far as it testifies to the use† made of Ps. 134; but it does not follow that the Song was written for the purpose.

The supposition of Tilling, that the Psalm contains a joyful exhortation to the priests and Levites to perform their duties faithfully now that after the Return worship in the temple has been restored, agrees with the arguments of the other pieces in this group. But there is no evidence that services were held at night during this period. The difficulty occurred to Venema, who suggested that the phrase בלילות commonly rendered *in the nights*, is properly a syncopated form of בהלילות *with Hallels*. With this emendation the Psalm might serve as an introduction to the Hallel-Psalm which follows it (Ps. 135).

But another possibility should not be overlooked. The Psalm may have been employed during the nights of anxious watching when, at the time Nehemiah was

*In the Tosephta of the Mishnic Tract *Sukka*, IV. 7.

† Cf. A. D. Neubauer, *Authorship and Titles of the Psalms according to the Early Jewish Authorities*, in *Studia Biblica* II, 1890, p. 4 seq.

rebuilding the walls, the citizens of Jerusalem were expecting an attack from their enemies.

(1) The term *servants of JHVH* might be applied to the congregation in general; but here, as the clause added by way of definition shows, it designates the priests and Levites who had in charge the various services of the temple; *to stand*, i. e. before the Lord, is the regular term employed to briefly describe the part taken by these persons in the worship of JHVH; cf. Deut. 10:8; Neh. 12:44; 1 Chron. 23:30; 2 Chron. 29:11; Deut. 18:7; Ezek. 44:11; Ps. 135:2; Hebrews 10:11.

De Wette and Olshausen suppose that an extraordinary assembly of the congregation has been made at night in the temple, and regard the address as an exhortation to penitence and piety; but for this idea there is no reason to be found in the Psalm. And while the possibility remains, that there were services in the sanctuary after nightfall, there is no evidence for it in the Old Testament. Some few commentators, therefore, are inclined to take לילות *nights* in the sense of *evenings*,* and think of services held at the hour of the evening offering (Hgstb.), but this seems forced. The correction suggested by Venema (בִּלְלוֹת = *with hallels*), though doubtful, would remove the difficulty, and would fit very well the meaning of בָּרְכוּ which is here used in the sense of *praise in song*; cf. Ps. 66:8: בָּרְכוּ עַמִּים אֱלֹהֵינוּ *Praise our God, ye nations*; Ps. 68:27; 96:2.

(2) The lifting up of the hands is the gesture of prayer and adoration; cf. Ps. 28:2; 44:21; 142:2; Lam. 3:41; Hab. 3:10; 1 Tim. 2:8. The suppliants always turned toward the most Holy Place where the sacred symbol of God's presence was; cf. Ps. 138:2.

(3) If, according to the usual explanation, vs. 1 and 2 contain the greetings of the watchmen to those who are coming to take their places, it seems strange that the response is made as to an individual. But, on the other hand, the singular in an address to the congregation is very common.

The formula of blessing seems analogous to that prescribed for use by the priests in Num. 6:24 sqq. Zion is God's chosen place of abode on earth; hence the expression: *bless thee out of Zion*; cf. 128:5. Here again the omnipotence of JHVH is emphasized; cf. 121:2; 124:8.

*Cf. Assyrian 1118ti "evenings."

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

DANIEL GURDEN STEVENS, JR., was born in Baltimore, Maryland, Sept. 17, 1869, of Baptist parentage. He received grammar-school and preparatory training in the schools of Baltimore County and in the Baltimore City College, graduating from the latter institution in 1888. In June, 1891, the degree of Bachelor of Arts was conferred upon him at the JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY, where he had taken the Classical Course of undergraduate studies. He then continued his studies at the University, making HEBREW his principal subject with ASSYRIAN and GREEK as first and second subordinates. He studied Greek under Professor BASIL L. GILDERSLEEVE, and Semitic Languages under Professor PAUL HAUPT, CYRUS ADLER, Ph.D., and CHRISTOPHER JOHNSTON, JR., M.A. During the years 1892-94 he held a Fellowship in Semitic Languages.

He has published abstracts of papers read before the University Philological Association as follows: ON THE SO-CALLED SONGS OF DEGREES, in the *Johns Hopkins University Circulars*, February, 1892, pp. 40 sq.; MESSIANIC PSALMS, *ib.*, June, 1893, p. 108; THE SONGS OF THE RETURN, *ib.*, July, 1894, pp. 115 sq; also a TRANSLATION OF LEVITICUS, CHAPTERS 1-5, *ib.*, July, 1894, pp. 112 sqq.

This work was undertaken at the suggestion of Professor Haupt, whose interpretation of the *Songs of the Return*, given in the Oriental Seminary of the Johns Hopkins University in the session of 1891-92, forms the basis of the present Commentary.

The writer takes this opportunity to express his lasting obligation to his instructors, especially to Professor Haupt for kindly counsel and the loan of valuable books and papers.

